NEWS / A2

GMA tells Kampi party mates to stop raiding Lakas ranks

WORLD / A29

Security council imposes new sanctions on Iraq

BUSINESS/ B1

Metro Pacific to invest P600M in Makati Medical Center

ENTERTAINMENT / G1

Kuh says Louie has his faults but he is not a murderer

Slow down, multitasker, or else commit mistakes

PARANG MAPAIT ITONG JUICE KO...
HELLO?
KAPE
JUICE

THINK YOU CAN JUGGLE phone calls, e-mail, instant messages and computer work to get more done in a time-starved world? Read on, preferably shutting out the cacophony of digital de-

SLOW DOWN/ A18

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS
Monday, March 26, 2007 ★★★ 10 sections / Vol. 22 / No. 108 P18 website: www.inquirer.net

Hungry Pinoy to get only P40 from fund—Osmeña

By Norman Bordadora and TJ Burgonio

THE P1 BILLION SET ASIDE BY PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo to alleviate hunger in six months will amount to just two kilos of rice for each hungry Filipino during the period, former Sen. John Osmeña said yesterday.

Ms Arroyo ordered the release of the money for the government's food-for-school and

HUNGRY PINOY/ A12

Int'l forum: RP gov't responsible for slays

Palace allies hit verdict as black propaganda

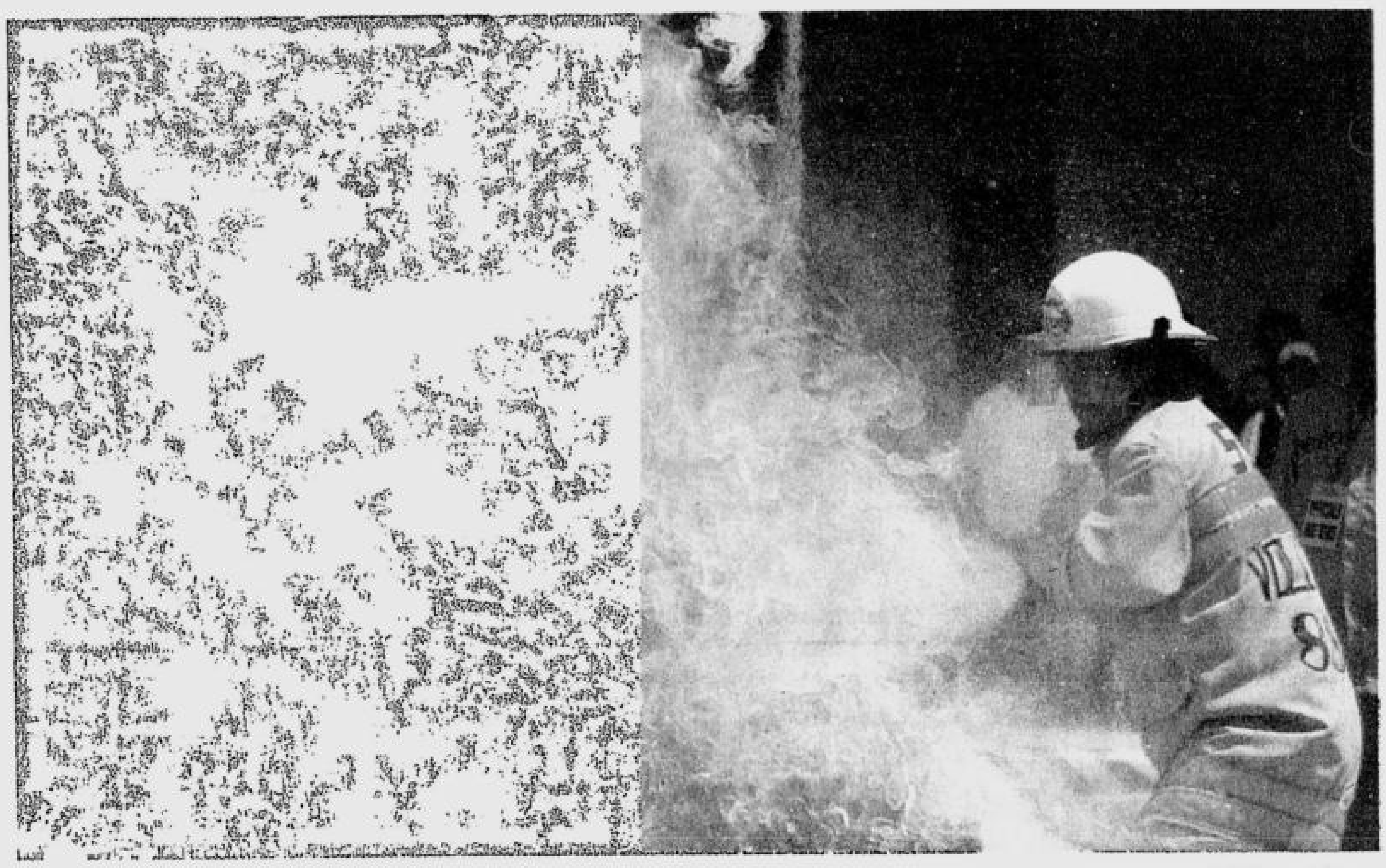
By Jocelyn R. Uy

A FORUM OF LAWYERS and human rights activists meeting in The Hague yesterday found the administration of President Macapagal-Arroyo responsible for unsolved killings and disappearances in the Philippines, according to a copy of its verdict sent to the INQUIRER late last night.

Malacañang allies in the House of Representatives slammed the verdict as unfair and biased.

"The wealth and consistency of the oral and written documentation made available through witnesses and expert reports, has convinced the [tribunal] that each and all of the three charges presented against [Ms Arroyo] and her government and against [US President] George Walker Bush and his government are substantiated," said the decision of the group called the Permanent People's Tribunal.

INT'L FORUM/ A20



A PARTICIPANT demonstrates how to control a blaze during the 7th National Fire Volunteer Olympics at the SM Mall of Asia in Pasay City on the occasion of Fire Prevention Month.

RYAN LIM

Towering inferno a challenge to firemen

By Jocelyn R. Uy

SPECIAL REPORT

SENIOR INSP. EMILIO LANGCAY, chief of operations of the Makati Fire Department, recalls that fateful noon of April 22, 2006, when a call came through that fire had broken out in a 26-story hotel on Makati Avenue.

It had a darkly ominous ring to it that brought back memories of the tragic inferno that engulfed the six-story Quezon City Manor Hotel in August 2001, killing 74 people. It was the country's worst fire.

He shuddered at the thought but conceded that fires rarely happened in the country's financial district. All the same, he had to deal with it.

"Whether it's a small house or a tall building that is burning, we always expect that it's going to be big," said Chief Insp. Rogelio Bucayo, who was the acting city fire marshal when the fire broke out at Makati's Best Western Astor Hotel last year.

On arriving there, he said he saw the hotel guests had started

TOWERING/ A19

7 killed as fire razes noodle factory in Cebu

By Jhunnex Napallacan
Inquirer Visayas

CEBU CITY—FIRE RIPPED THROUGH a noodle factory at 1:30 a.m. yesterday, killing a 70-year-old Chinese-Filipino woman, her daughter and five

7 KILLED/ A19

Bishop says soldiers harassing Metro folk

By Nikko Dizon

A TOP CHURCH OFFICIAL IN THE Manila archdiocese expressed alarm over the presence of soldiers in Metro Manila barangays and accused the military of making the public think they were only doing civic action work.

Bishop Broderick Pabillo, whom Pope Benedict XVI appointed auxiliary bishop of Manila last year, said he had received complaints from residents about how soldiers were tailing some people, asking who the leaders of the party-list groups in the areas were, and then looking for their houses.

"I don't know their ulterior motives but there is a hidden agenda, and it (harassment) might be one of them," Pabillo said in an interview on Friday.

"We can see that there appears to be a deception of the people. The AFP is giving many reasons, like they are doing engineering work, they are giving assistance, but in truth, the military is not doing anything like that. Then they are saying that they are having training and immersion," he said.

Pabillo said he had submitted a report to Manila Archbishop Gaudencio Cardinal Rosales about the deployment of soldiers in the communities, their activities and their military units.

He said the cardinal was studying the report.

The Armed Forces of the Philippines has admitted deploying nearly 300 troops in several poor barangays in the metropolis, claiming they were performing civic action work. Some residents have accused them of intimidating people against voting for candidates of progressive groups in the May elections, a charge the AFP denies.

Pabillo said it was his task to attend to the "social services of the Church."

"When you take care of social

BISHOP SAYS/ A8

US presidential hopeful John Edwards' wife Elizabeth. AP

Fighting cancer, waging bigger battle

LAS VEGAS—AS THE NURSE fumbled to find the vein in her arm on Wednesday, Elizabeth Edwards braced for the worst possible news but said her decision about her husband's presidential campaign had been sealed.

A doctor had already told her a bone scan revealed that her cancer had returned in an incurable form. Mrs. Edwards was preparing for further tests—that she expected would reveal a perilous spread of the cancer.

"I was feeling particularly des-

FIGHTING/ A18

Ocampo sees Mandela as model of endurance

By Christian V. Esguerra

IN HIS NINE DAYS OF CAPTIVITY, Rep. Satur Ocampo has been able to achieve small victories. Still, nothing beats the sweet scent of freedom.

Yesterday, a lazy Sunday afternoon, was unusual for him. For the first time since his arrest, he found time for himself inside the heavily secured Rizal Conference Room at the Manila Police District headquarters, his makeshift "cell."

Sitting on a monobloc chair, with two armed policemen watching over him, the leader of the Bayan Muna party-list group leafed through a weathered copy of Nelson Mandela's 638-page autobiography, "Long Walk to Freedom."

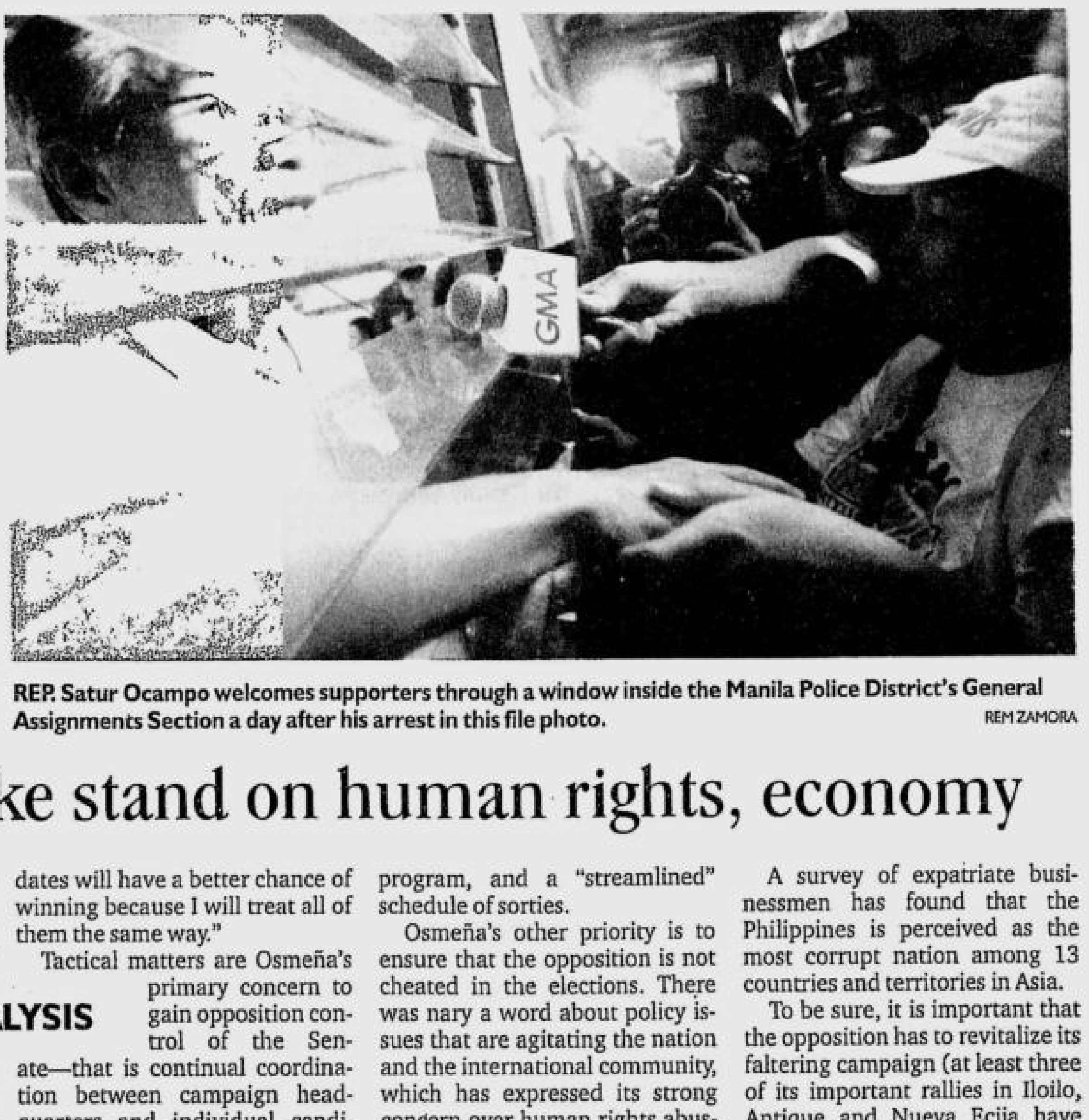
Reading about the life of the celebrated human rights activist is no plain leisure for the detained party-list lawmaker.

He apparently feeds on the words of the Nobel Peace Prize winner, the enduring symbol of democratic South Africa.

"I'm inspired by his capacity to endure, the clarity of his vision, his determination to prove himself correct," Ocampo said in an interview yesterday.

The activist leader is no stranger to the 88-year-old Mandela. Back when he was jailed

OCAMPO SEES/ A20



REP. Satur Ocampo welcomes supporters through a window inside the Manila Police District's General Assignments Section a day after his arrest in this file photo.

REM ZAMORA

GO candidates must take stand on human rights, economy

By Amando Doronila

ANALYSIS

MIDWAY INTO THE MAY ELECTION campaign, it is dismaying that the Genuine Opposition (GO) has not come up with an alternative policy with which to confront the administration of President Macapagal-Arroyo on two important issues—the economy and the increasingly dangerous tendency of the military to seize control of the national security agenda from a weak civilian government.

The new general manager of the opposition's campaign, Sen. Sergio Osmeña III, formally took charge of the campaign only last week. All he said upon taking command was that "all the (GO senatorial) candidates will have a better chance of winning because I will treat all of them the same way."

Tactical matters are Osmeña's primary concern to gain opposition control of the Senate—that is continual coordination between campaign headquarters and individual candidates, a more aggressive media program, and a "streamlined" schedule of sorties.

Osmeña's other priority is to ensure that the opposition is not cheated in the elections. There was nary a word about policy issues that are agitating the nation and the international community, which has expressed its strong concern over human rights abuses.

A survey of expatriate businessmen has found that the Philippines is perceived as the most corrupt nation among 13 countries and territories in Asia.

To be sure, it is important that the opposition has to revitalize its faltering campaign (at least three of its important rallies in Iloilo, Antique and Nueva Ecija have

GO BETS/ A20

EZ2 ⑦ ㉒ | **Mid-Day SUERTRES Evening** ⑧ ③ ⓪ | ⑨ ⑧ ④

(All in exact order)

SUPERLOTTO 6/49

⑦ ⑨ ⑬ ⑭ ㊷ ㊼

P15,807,772.80

Second FRONTPAGE

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WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Northern Luzon will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers. The rest of the country will be partly cloudy to at times cloudy with isolated rainshowers or thunderstorms.

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	**Iloilo/Bacolod**	Partly Cloudy
Baguio	Cloudy with Rains	**Roxas**	Partly Cloudy
Tuguegarao	Cloudy with Rains	**Cebu**	Partly Cloudy
Laoag	Cloudy with Rains	**Tacloban**	Partly Cloudy
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	**Gen. Santos**	Partly Cloudy
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	**Zamboanga**	Partly Cloudy
Legazpi	Partly Cloudy	**Cagayan de Oro**	Partly Cloudy
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	**Davao**	Partly Cloudy

COMPILED BY: KATE PEDROSO, INQUIRER RESEARCH/03/25/07 SOURCE: PAGASA

JDV: President's hand was forced

LIKE A SWORD OF DAMOCLES hanging over her head, the threat of yet another impeachment complaint against her in July was President Macapagal-Arroyo's overriding concern in deciding to intervene in the Kampi-Lakas CMD rift.

Speaker Jose de Venecia Jr. told the INQUIRER yesterday that the President wanted "to ensure her hold on power, so that there would be continuity of the programs to advance the economy" after the May 14 midterm elections.

De Venecia said that would necessitate the continued dominance of the ruling party Lakas-CMD in the House of Representatives where impeachment complaints emanate.

He expressed confidence that being the dominant political organization for the last 15 years, "Lakas is capable of sweeping majority of the congressional seats at stake in the polls."

"We are targeting 120 or more seats in order to retain control of the Lower House," said De Venecia, now on his fourth term as Speaker, pointing to the threat of another impeachment by the opposition if it manages to get a third of the 236 seats, or 79, in the polls.

The opposition had attempted twice to impeach Ms Arroyo, but failed to muster the required signatures to transmit the impeachment complaints to the Senate for trial.

Michael Lim Ubac

Stop raiding Lakas, GMA orders Kampi

By Michael Lim Ubac

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO has ordered her party mates in the Kabalikat ng Malayang Pilipino (Kampi) to refrain from raiding the ranks of the ruling party, Lakas-Christian Muslim Democrats, a Lakas official told the INQUIRER yesterday.

Lakas executive director Ray Roquero said the President had quietly relayed the order to Kampi officials led by Camarines Sur Rep. Luis Villafuerte to put an end to the infighting within the administration coalition that has threatened to break it apart with the crucial midterm elections less than two months away.

In fact, as a sign of her resolve, Roquero said, "she will personally preside over the Lakas national convention on April 2."

Roquero said the President was assuming her "rightful role" as the head of the coalition by taking a much more active hand in the resolution of the Lakas-Kampi row over candidates at the local level.

This would also "bury speculation" that she was abandoning the party founded by former President Fidel Ramos and Speaker Jose de Venecia, he said.

Saved from collapse

Lakas provided Ms Arroyo with a political vehicle when she successfully ran as De Venecia's running mate in the 1998 presidential election. With Ramos' and De Venecia's backing, the party eventually brought her to Malacañang in 2001 and helped save her beleaguered presidency from collapse in 2005.

"This will once and for all put a stop to this malicious speculation that pits allies against fellow allies," said Roquero. "She ran under Lakas and she is the chair of the party. She continues to be the source of strength and guidance for all Lakas members."

Roquero also said about 90 percent of local and congressional posts had common candidates of the coalition, which include Lakas and Kampi, vying for them.

He said the remaining areas could be declared "free zones," to include the gubernatorial derby in Pampanga, Pangasinan and Batangas.

A common candidate, being the coalition's official bet in a local area, would enjoy both national funding and local support from members of parties coalesced with Lakas.

The Speaker, for his part, said in an interview that a "unified front" among coalition members would ensure victory for the administration's Team Unity senatorial candidates.

De Venecia said "the massive grassroots support" coming from local officials and candidates for local posts would "propel the Team Unity senatorial bets to victory, contrary to the prediction of administration critics."

Well-oiled machine

"The grassroots machinery is well-oiled because we have many incumbents running for congressional posts and the positions of governor, vice governor, board member, city and municipal mayor and vice mayor and councilor," De Venecia said.

The Lakas convention will gather some 2,000 national and local candidates "in a massive show of force" on April 2 at the Folk Arts Theater in Manila, according to Roquero.

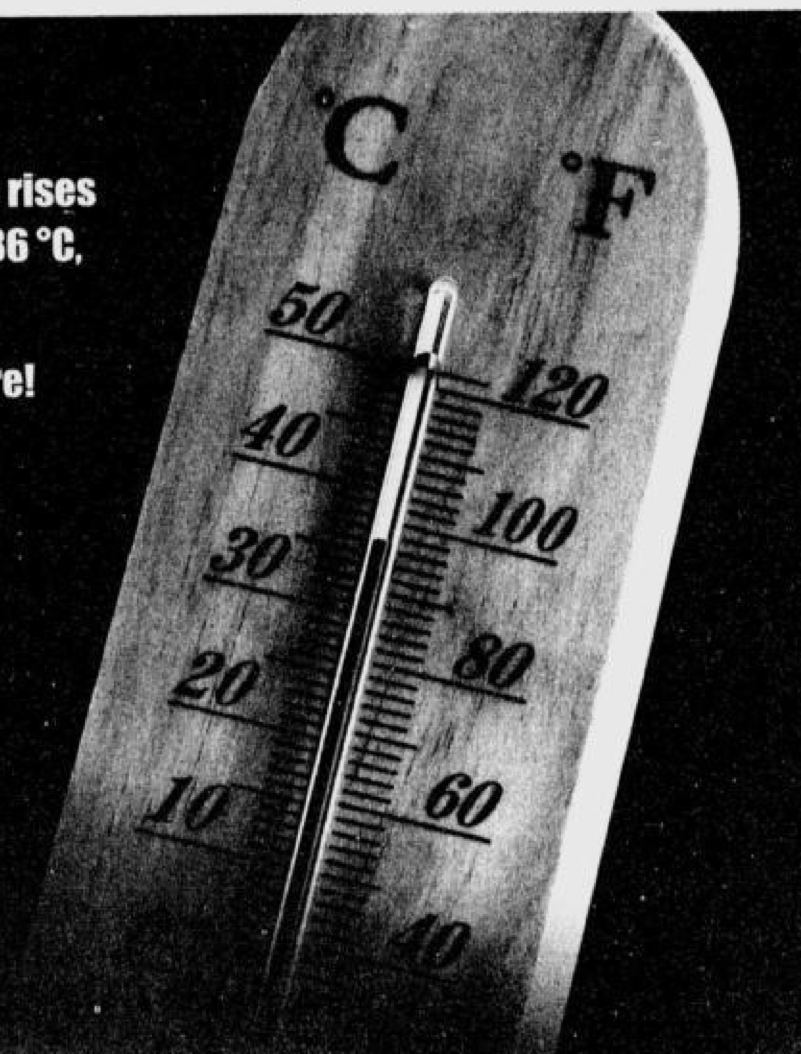
At the time, Lakas-CMD will formally present its seven senatorial candidates under Team Unity, 132 congressional bets, 61 gubernatorial aspirants and more than 1,000 city and municipal mayoralty hopefuls.

De Venecia, party president, said Lakas-CMD would be fielding close to 10,000 candidates for the 17,813 positions at stake in the May 14 polls in its bid to retain the House leadership and regain the upperhand in the Senate.

As the dominant majority party in the last three national elections which catapulted Ramos in 1992 and Ms Arroyo in 2004 to the presidency, Lakas-CMD would also formalize its strategic alliances with the Liberal Party, the Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino and 11 party-list groups led by the Association of Philippine Electric Cooperatives, he said.

"In this momentous gathering, the Filipino people will witness why Lakas-CMD is the most trusted party as shown in the recent national survey of the Social Weather Stations," said De Venecia, who is himself seeking reelection in the fourth district of Pangasinan.

"When Filipinos think of a political party they appreciate most, one name is above the rest—Lakas-CMD, where performance is the true heart of politics."



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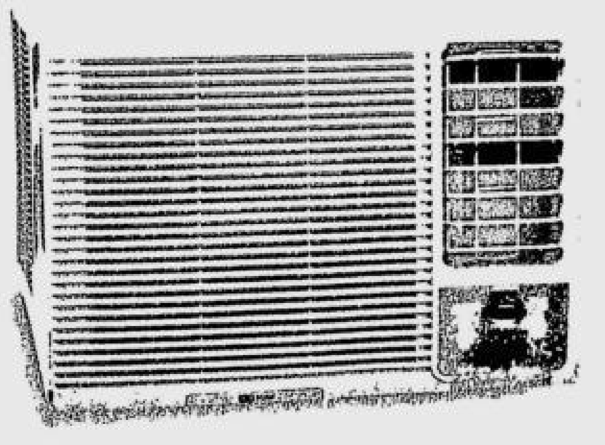

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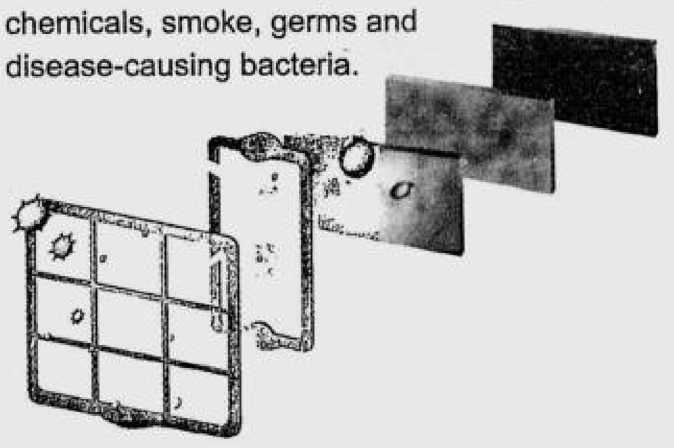

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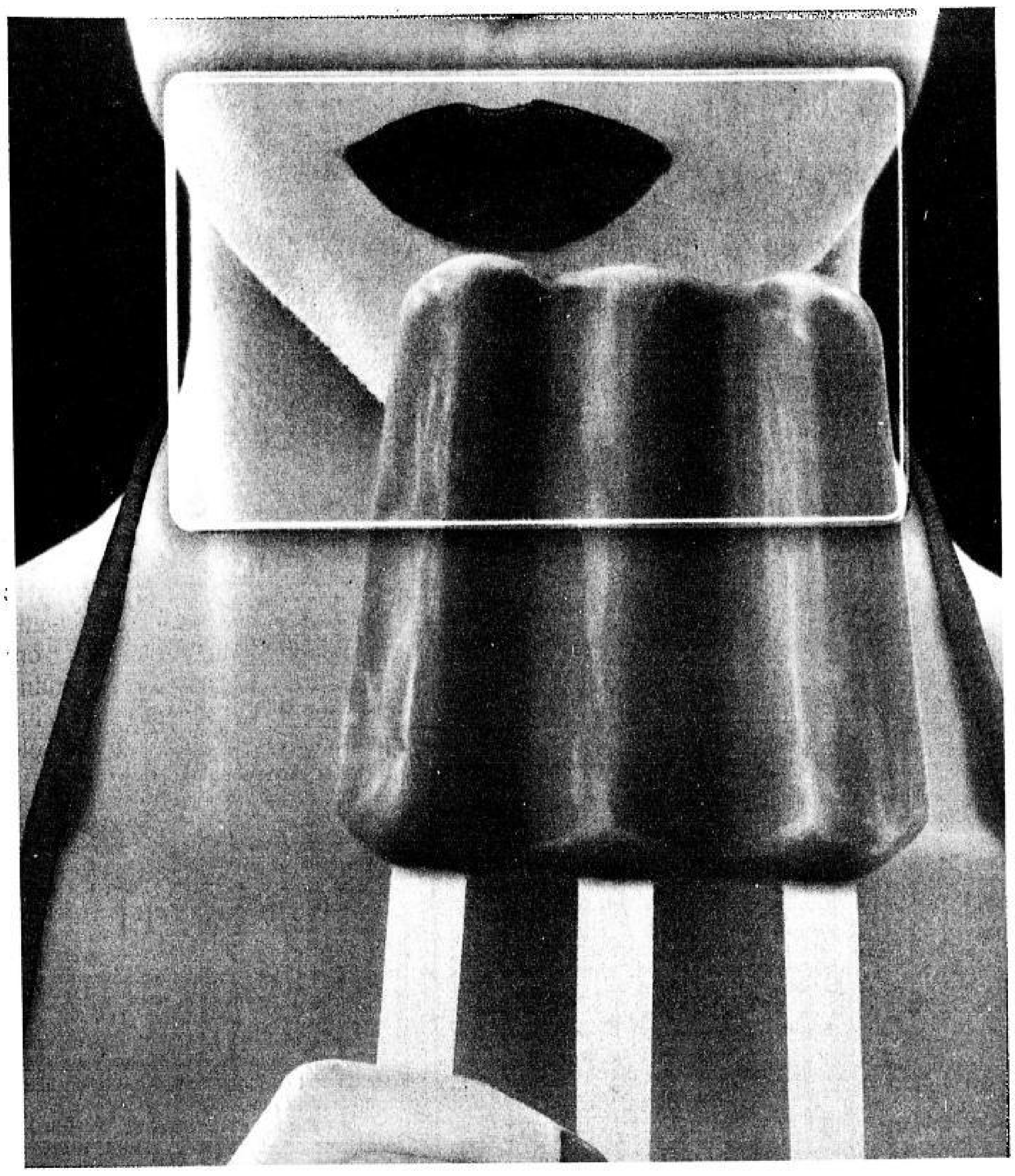

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US dangles funds for RP drive vs human smuggling

By Tarra Quismundo

THE UNITED STATES HAS OFFERED to fund organizations and government agencies in the fight against human trafficking in the country.

Promising to be the Philippines' "strong and dedicated partner" against human smuggling, the American Embassy in Manila announced this week that the US government would fund qualified anti-human trafficking projects proposed by both government and local nongovernment organizations.

"The US Embassy and the US Department of State's Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons (TIP) are now accepting project proposals from nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), international organizations and government agencies that will address and assist with identified TIP issues in the Philippines," the embassy said in a statement.

"The battle against human trafficking is a high priority for the US government and the American people," it added.

The mission said "competitive funding" from the US state department was available for proposals such as "law enforcement-related projects and cooperative efforts between the criminal justice sector and civil society, especially those designed to improve victim protection and assistance services."

Entries should be submitted "in electronic form" by April 13.

Funding will be available through the International Narcotics, Crime and Law Enforcement (INCLE) Fund and the Economic Support Fund, said the guidelines posted by the embassy on its website.

INCLE may fund projects relating to "technical assistance to improve antitrafficking legislation, the development of anti-TIP written policies for law enforcement agencies, implementation of improved procedures for law enforcement to identify and rescue victims, conduct investigations, protect and assist victims and prosecute traffickers."

ESF is interested in projects that will increase the "availability and implementation of comprehensive victim assistance, rehabilitation and reintegration," including the provision of employment, shelter, protection, education, medical and mental health services.

The projects "should assist NGOs and government agencies to develop, implement or expand comprehensive services for adult and child victims of sex trafficking and forced labor."

Recently, the embassy tied up with the Manila International Airport Authority and the Bureau of Immigration to create the Ninoy Aquino International Airport's Task Force on Trafficking in Persons.

The task force is mandated to clamp down on human smuggling at the airport.

Cops to get recycled arms

THE MILITARY WILL TURN OVER TO THE Philippine National Police some of the firearms seized from enemies of the state like communist rebels and other armed groups.

"We will ask them (PNP) to choose the firearms that can still be rehabilitated and then we will destroy the rest," Philippine Army chief Lt. Gen. Romeo Tolentino told reporters.

The PNP is in the process of purchasing firearms for its 110,000-member force.

Tolentino said he had talked to PNP officials about the plan.

The Armed Forces of the Philippines last week began destroying the 53,805 assorted firearms that were confiscated, captured, surrendered or recovered during military operations and encounters with New People's Army rebels, the Abu Sayyaf and other armed groups.

Tolentino along with Defense Secretary Hermogenes Ebdane and AFP Chief of Staff Gen. Hermogenes Esperon Jr. led the ceremonial disposal of 1,600 of the firearms at Fort Bonifacio during the Army's 110th anniversary last week.

The firearms were cut into pieces and burned. Residue or metal scraps from the firearms will be disposed of through public auction and their proceeds will go to a trust fund set up to support the AFP modernization program, officials said. *Christine O. Avendano*

Every woman has the right to know the evidence:

Health risks for children who are not breastfed

Below are some examples from hundreds of research studies that show the importance of breastfeeding and the dangers of unnecessary and improper formula feeding.

Diarrhea and pneumonia

Formula-fed babies are sick 3 times longer and twice as often as breastfed babies in the first 6 months of life.

Lopez Alarcon M, Villapando S, Fajardo A. Breast-feeding lowers the frequency and duration of acute respiratory infection and diarrhea in infants under six months of age. *Journal of Nutrition.* 1997.

Formula-fed Filipino children have a five-fold increased risk of diarrhea.

Popkin BM et al. Breastfeeding and diarrheal morbidity. *Pediatrics.* 1990 Dec; 86(6): 874-82.

Exclusive breastfeeding prevents at least 33% of diarrhea cases.

Leon-Cava N. *Quantifying the benefits of breastfeeding: A summary of the evidence.* Pan American Health Organization: 2002.

Studies conducted in several countries show that formula-fed children have up to a 16.7-fold increased risk of pneumonia than breastfed children.

Leon-Cava N. *Quantifying the benefits of breastfeeding: A summary of the evidence.* Pan American Health Organization: 2002; Edmond KM, Zandoh C, Quigley MA, et al. *Pediatrics* 2006;117:380-384; Popkin BM et al. Breastfeeding and diarrheal morbidity. *Pediatrics.* 1990 Dec; 86(6): 874-82; Cesar JA, Victora CG, Barros FC et al. Impact of breastfeeding on admission for pneumonia during postneonatal period in Brazil: Nested case-control study. *British Medical Journal* 1999;318:1316-20.

Asthma

Formula-fed infants have 40-50% higher risk of developing asthma and wheeze than infants who were breastfed for nine months or longer.

Dell S, To T. Breastfeeding and Asthma in Young Children. *Archives of Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine* 155:1261-1265, 2001; Oddy WH etal. Maternal asthma, infant feeding, and the risk for asthma in childhood. *Journal of Allergy and Clinicial Immunology.* 110:65-67, 2002.

Food allergy

Children breastfed the longest had the lowest incidence of atopy, eczema, food allergy and respiratory allergy.

Saarinen UM, Kajosarri M. Breastfeeding as a Prophylactic Against Atopic Disease: Prospective follow-up Study until 17 years old, *Lancet* 346:1065-1069, 1995.

Reduced intelligence

Formula-fed children have IQ 3-5 points fewer than breastfed children. The difference increases with longer breastfeeding.

Anderson et al. Breast-feeding and cognitive development: a meta-analysis. *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition.* 1999 Oct;70(4):525-35; Mortenson EL, Michaelsen KF, Sanders SA, Reeinisch JM. The association between duration of breastfeeding and adult intelligence. *Journal of the American Medical Association* 2002;287:2365-2371.

Infection from contaminated formula

According to the International Food Safety Authorities Network, "it seems not to be possible, using current technology, to produce commercially sterile powders or completely eliminate the potential of contamination." Courts have noted that pathogenic or disease-producing germs may be introduced into the body through food. The greatest danger of disease from such a source is milk and milk products.

World Health Assembly 58 32 (see Annex 15) and FAO-WHO Study February 2004; McKenna v. Galveston, Tex. Civ. App. 113 SW 2d 606; H.P. Hood v. Du Mond, 336 US 525 (1949).

Chronic diseases

Children who were never breastfed were 2.7 times more likely to be overweight than those who were breastfed.

Hediger ML, Overpeck MD, Kuczmarski RJ, Ruan WJ. Association between infant breastfeeding and overweight in young children. *Journal of the American Medical Association* 2001;285:2453–60.

Infants who were not breastfed upon birth had 33% higher risk of developing diabetes than those who were breastfed.

Jones ME, Swerdlow AJ, Gill LE, et al. Pre-natal and early life risk factors for childhood onset diabetes mellitus: A record linkage study. *International Journal of Epidemiology* 1998;27:444–9.

Exclusive breastfeeding for six months and continued breastfeeding protect the child against diabetes.

Sadauskaite-Kuehne V, Ludvigsson J, Padaiga Z, Jasinskiene E, Samuel U. Longer "Breastfeeding is an Independent Protective Factor against Development of Type I Diabetes Mellitus in Childhood." *Diabetic Metabolic Research Review* 20: 150-157, 2004.

Children who were not breastfed were at least 25% more likely to get leukemia than those who were breastfed.

Shu XO, Linet MS, Steinbuch M, et al. Breast-feeding and risk of childhood acute leukemia. *Journal of National Cancer Institute* 1999,91:1765–72.

The UK Childhood Cancer Study found that breastfeeding tended to reduce cancer.

UK Childhood Cancer Investigators. "Breastfeeding and Childhood Cancer." *British Journal on Cancer* 85:1685-1694, 2001

Breastfeeding saves lives

Globally, breastfeeding can prevent 1.3 million deaths. Over 30 studies from around the world, in the developing and developed countries alike, have shown that breastfeeding dramatically reduces the risk of dying.

Leon-Cava N. *Quantifying the benefits of breastfeeding: A summary of the evidence.* Pan American Health Organization: 2002.

A study revealed that infants who were exclusively breastfed during the first hour, were 9 times less likely to die than those who were initiated to mixed formula and breastmilk after 72 hours from birth.

Edmond KM, Zandoh C, Quigley MA, et al. *Pediatrics* 2006;117:380-384.

Global evidence shows that exclusive breastfeeding prevents at least 75% of deaths from diarrhea and 70% of deaths due to pneumonia.

Leon-Cava N. *Quantifying the benefits of breastfeeding: A summary of the evidence.* Pan American Health Organization: 2002.

The World Health Organization and UNICEF recommend exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months of baby's life. Afterwards, local, nutritious foods should be introduced, while breastfeeding continues up to two years or beyond.

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Power plant sale attracts interest

AT LEAST FIVE GROUPS HAVE EXPRESSED interest in buying the 600-megawatt Masinloc coal-fired power plant in Zambales which the government is bidding out for the second time, a senior government official said on Sunday.

Froilan Tampinco, vice president for asset management and electricity trading group of the state-run Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corp. (PSALM) told reporters that two were US companies, one was a regional investor group, while the others were local investors.

Tampinco declined to name any of the likely bidders in the July 26 auction, the biggest sale so far in the government push to sell its electricity-generating assets.

The local bidders were utility companies that had participated in earlier auctions for the power plant, Tampinco said.

The government wants to sell Masinloc and dozens of other power assets to raise up to $5 billion and reform the electricity sector.

It had sold the Masinloc plant before but the Malaysian-controlled buyer pulled out, sources said, because of uncertainty over who would buy the electricity output.

YNN Pacific Consortium Inc., which is controlled by Malaysian power firm Ranhill Bhd., backed out of the deal to buy the Masinloc plant last year because of the absence of a power supply contract with Manila Electric Co., the Philippines' largest power distributor, sources had said earlier.

Attempts to sell government power plants and lease out the power grid have made little progress due to the lack of supply contracts and court intervention to keep tariffs low, as well as security and political uncertainties.

PSALM has said it would seek to attach power supply contracts to attract more bidders for Masinloc. *Reuters*

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EVEN WHEN THERE'S MILK AROUND

Public most satisfied with Senate, survey shows

THE SENATE TOPPED THE FIRST quarter Social Weather Stations (SWS) net satisfaction survey of top government institutions, with Senate President Manuel Villar logging in as the most popular public official.

The opposition-led Senate, which stonewalled a move by Malacañang and the House of Representatives to amend the Constitution last year, garnered 51 percent "satisfied" and 25 percent "dissatisfied" marks for a fairly good net rating of +26 during the survey period Feb. 24 to 27.

The net rating is the difference between the percentage of satisfied and dissatisfied responses.

The Supreme Court came in second with 44 percent satisfied and 28 percent dissatisfied for a moderately good net rating of +16, followed by the House of Representatives with 40 percent satisfied and 30 percent dissatisfied for a net rating of +11.

The Cabinet came in last with 32 percent satisfied and 35 percent dissatisfied for a negative net rating of -2.

The administration as a whole scored a net rating of -3, with more people dissatisfied (40 percent) than satisfied (37 percent).

The President was covered in an earlier reported survey, garnering the lowest net rating of -4 for the first quarter of 2007, with 39 percent satisfied against 43 percent dissatisfied.

Public leaders

Among the public leaders of the four institutions surveyed, Villar scored the highest net satisfaction rating of +52, with 67 percent satisfied and 14 percent dissatisfied with his performance. His rating was higher than his predecessor, Sen. Franklin Drilon, but was similar to the ratings obtained by most Senate Presidents in the 1990s.

Vice President Noli de Castro came in second with 59 percent satisfied and 24 percent dissatisfied for a fairly good net satisfaction rating of +36. His ratings were higher than former Vice Presidents Teofisto Guingona and Salvador Laurel but not as high as those of Joseph Estrada and President Arroyo when they held the Vice Presidency.

Speaker Jose de Venecia got a more or less neutral net rating of +5, with 39 percent satisfied and 34 percent dissatisfied. He was more popular during his stint as Speaker during the Ramos administration, when his net rating ranged from +13 to +46.

New Chief Justice Reynato Puno got also a neutral net rating of +1, with 32 percent satisfied and 30 percent dissatisfied. His popularity was similar to that of his predecessor, Chief Justice Artemio Panganiban, whose ratings ranged from net -3 to +4, although previous Chief Justices had ratings usually between +20 and +40, with former Chief Justices Claudio Teehankee and Hilario Davide rating the highest.

Public satisfaction with the Arroyo Cabinet as a whole has had its ups and downs. The last time its net rating was on the positive side was in March 2004.

Improvement

Some improvement was noted for the administration whose net rating was at rather low levels of net -6 to -15 in 2005 before turning neutral beginning in June 2006 at between -3 to +2.

The First Quarter of 2007 Social Weather Survey was conducted using face-to-face interviews of 1,200 adults divided into random samples of 300 each in Metro Manila, the balance of Luzon, the Visayas and Mindanao. It had a sampling error margin of plus or minus 3 percent for national percentages, and plus or minus 6 percent for area percentages.

According to SWS, the quarterly surveys on public satisfaction with the Vice President, Senate President, Speaker of the House, the Chief Justice and the top government institutions are not commissioned, but are done on their own initiative as a public service.

Kate Pedroso, Inquirer Research

'Poll shows people want to keep Senate'

By Norman Bordadora and Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

SENATORIAL CANDIDATES OF both the administration and the opposition yesterday held up the Social Weather Stations' latest survey that gave the Senate the top net satisfaction rating among public offices as a vindication of their defiance to Malacañang's numerous attempts to muzzle the upper chamber.

Senate President Manuel Villar, who is seeking another Senate term under the Genuine Opposition (GO) ticket, said the high approval ratings he, as Senate President, and the Senate got in the SWS survey showed the people did not want the Senate abolished as proposed by advocates of Charter change.

Pro-Charter change advocates had called for a unicameral parliament which would, in effect, abolish the Senate.

"It would be logical to think that only an opposition-dominated Senate could better provide the independence of mind that our people need, especially under an administration that has the propensity to abuse its power," said reelectionist Sen. Panfilo Lacson.

Making a pitch for the GO team, Lacson said Filipinos may not expect that kind of independence from "a bunch of yes men and women running with the support of (President Macapagal-Arroyo)."

Former House Minority Leader and Sorsogon Rep. Francis Escudero, who is also seeking a Senate seat, said people "look up to the Senate as the last bastion of independence and democracy; their last hope for their voices to be heard and for abuses in government to be checked."

Escudero dared the Charter change proponents in the administration's Team Unity senatorial slate to explain why they were running for the Senate when they believed it no longer served its purpose.

Sen. Ralph Recto of Team Unity agreed that the high ratings for the Senate showed that the public appreciated the need to have an independent Senate.

"We definitely need an independent Senate but not necessarily an obstructionist Senate. We need a Senate whose role is to fiscalize and to cooperate," said Recto.

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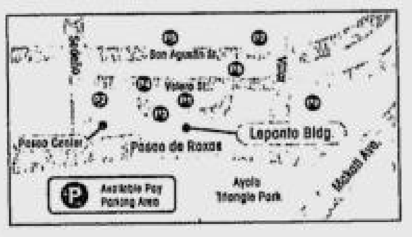

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Church group still waiting

THE NATIONAL SECRETARIAT FOR SOCIAL Action, Justice and Peace (Nassa), an episcopal committee of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines, is awaiting the Commission on Elections decision on its bid for accreditation to conduct a joint quick count with the National Citizens Movement for Free Elections (Namfrel) in the May 14 elections.

While the Comelec approved last week the petition of Namfrel to conduct an unofficial quick count, there was no word yet on Nassa's petition.

"We are preparing a letter asking them (Comelec) to tell us in writing what is really the status of Nassa," said Nassa chair Marbel Bishop Dinualdo Gutierrez, in an interview over Radio Veritas on Friday.

Gutierrez reiterated that Nassa and Namfrel had agreed to conduct a joint quick count of the election results.

On Thursday, Comelec Chair Benjamin Abalos Sr. announced that the poll body had accredited Namfrel on the condition that its chair, businessman Jose Concepcion Jr., inhibit himself from the quick count.

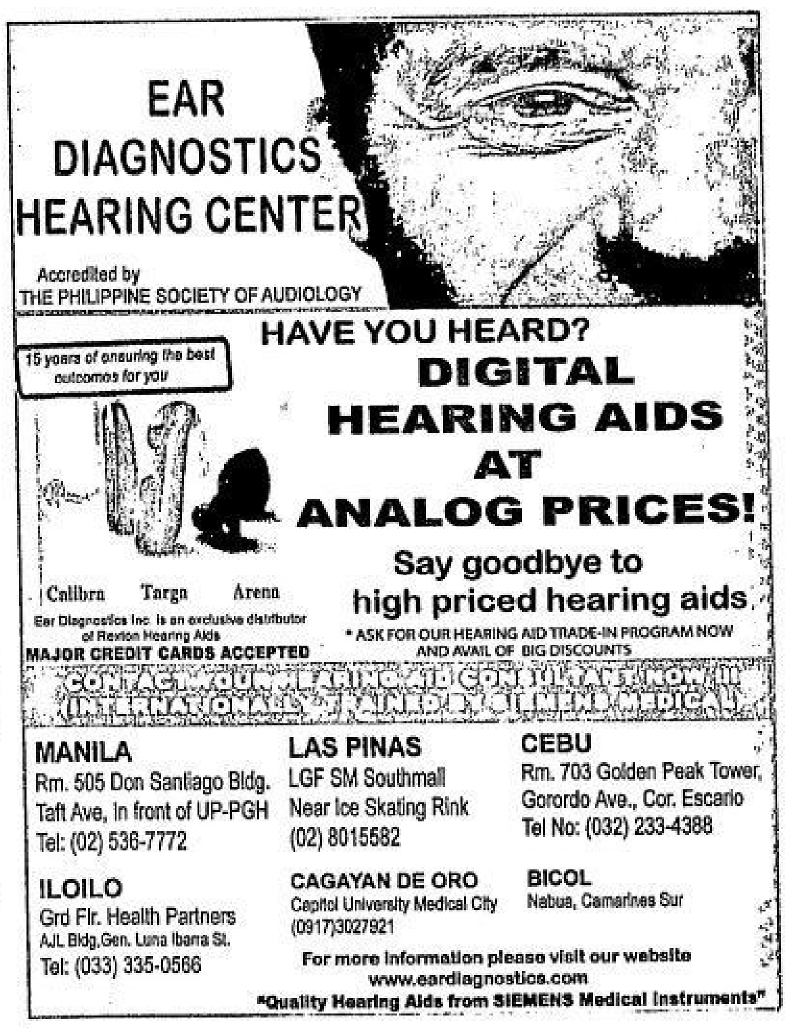
Gutierrez sits as Namfrel cochair.

Gutierrez said that following Abalos' announcement, he spoke with Comelec Commissioner Ressurreccion Borra who told him that Nassa's petition was being held in "abeyance."

Gutierrez recalled that Abalos had even said the Comelec wanted to "marry Nassa and Namfrel."

Nikko Dizon

ONE GOD
To show Muslim-Christian unity, administration senatorial candidate Sultan Jamalul Kiram III (seated) attended Sunday Mass officiated by Bishop Emilio Marquez at the St. Ferdinand Cathedral in Lucena City with Luis "Chavit" Singson, Prospero Pichay and Edgardo Angara. Kiram, the only Muslim in the Team Unity ticket, even kissed the bishop's ring. NIÑO JESUS ORBETA



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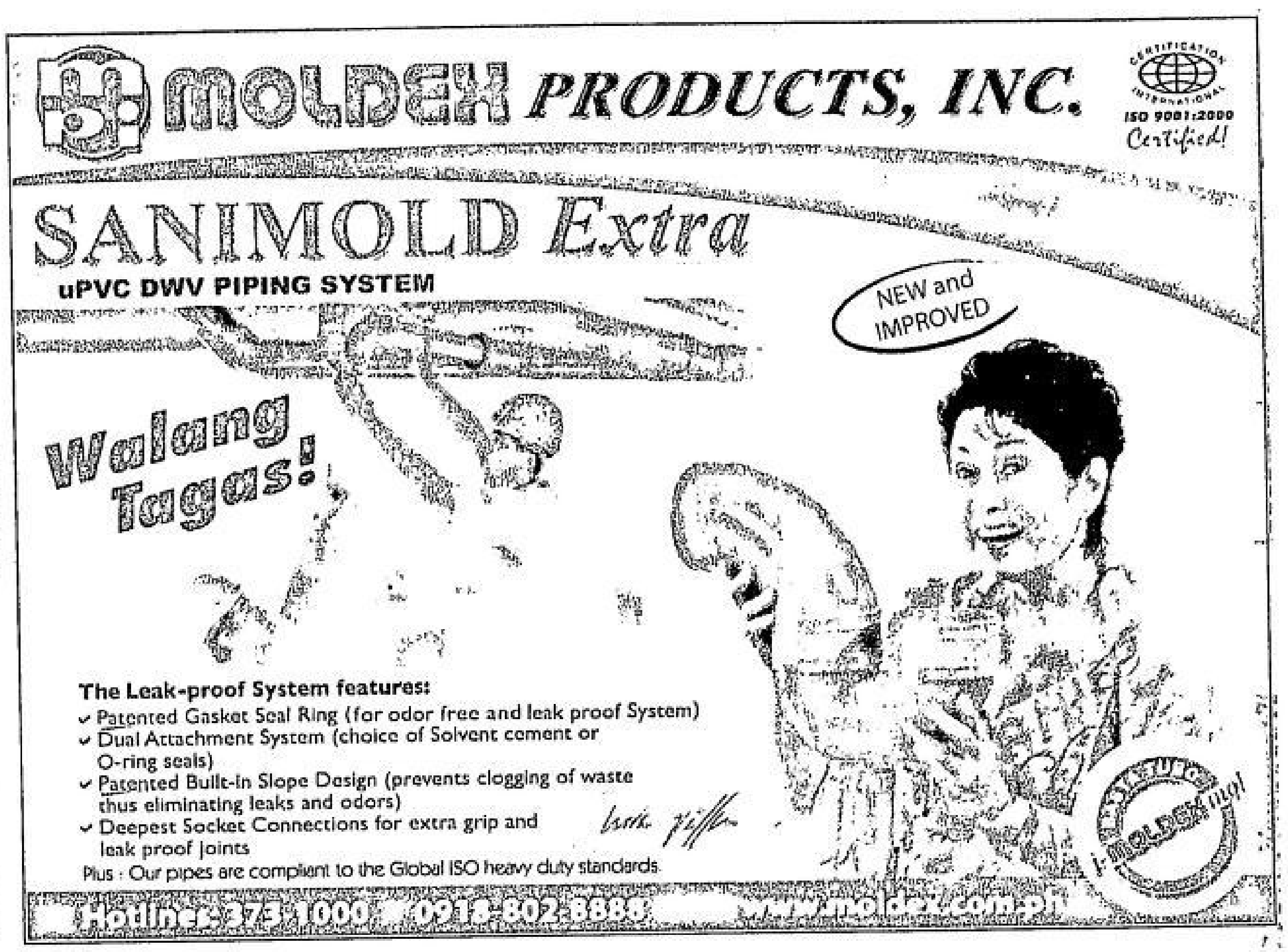

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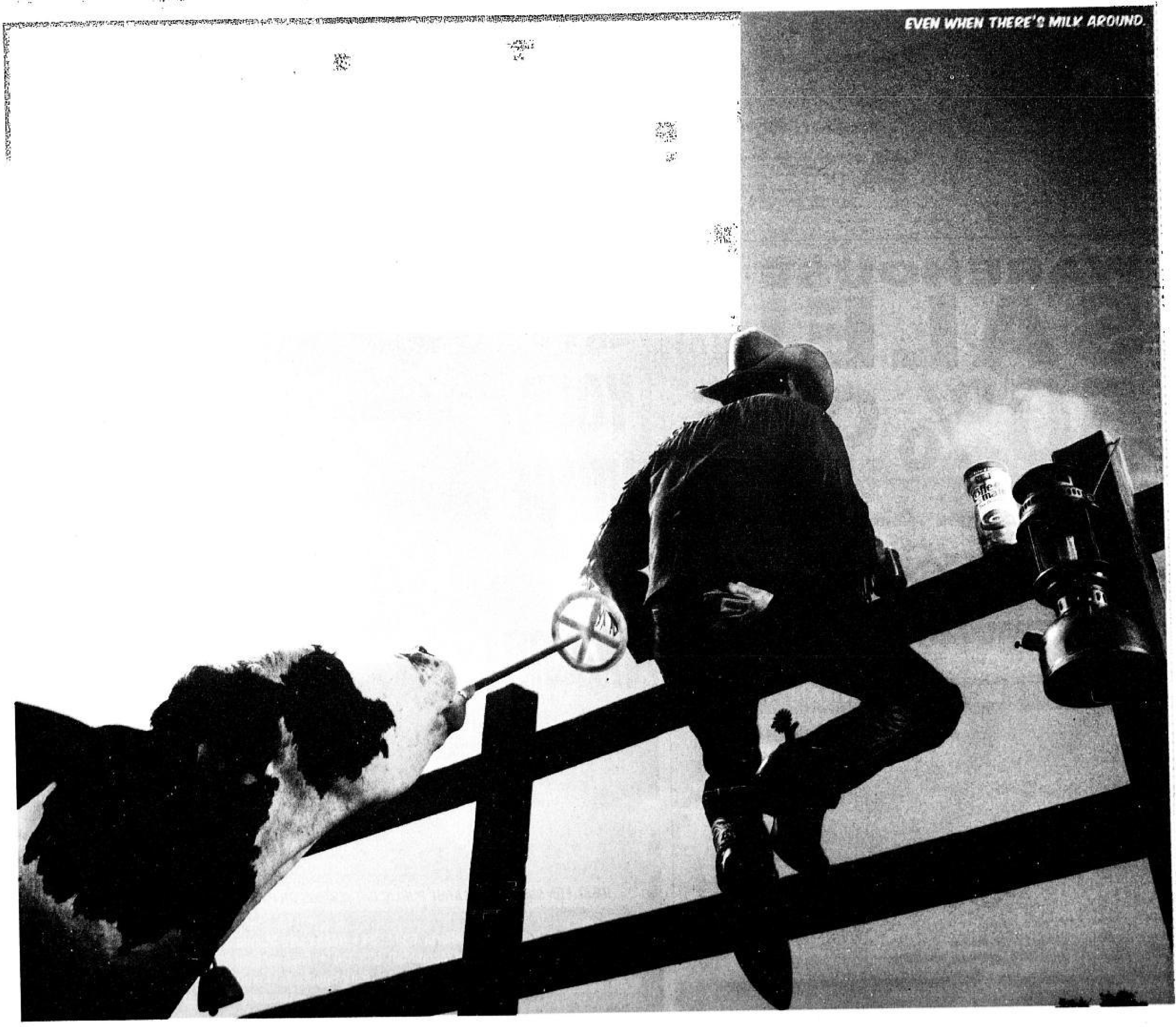

Bishop says soldiers harassing Metro folk

From page A1

services, you take care of social realities. And the social service of the Church is helping the poor but it is also our job to point out what it is that adds to the misery of the poor," he said in Filipino.

Militarization is making life hard for the people, the bishop pointed out.

No to military solutions

He said that in his view, if the problem in a community is political, the solution should be political and not military.

"If the problem is economic, it calls for economic, not military, solutions," the bishop stressed.

He said the military appeared to have adopted a brinkmanship policy without respect for the sensitivities of the people.

Asked if he was against the "militarization" of these areas, the bishop said: "We really oppose it."

Pabillo has gone to several communities in the archdiocese to observe and check for himself the reports brought to his attention by the church-based group Justice and Peace Integrity of Creation (JPIC) in late February.

Baseco, Parola

It was the JPIC, he said, that brought to the attention of party-list groups the presence of soldiers in Metro Manila barangays since late last year.

Last week, Pabillo joined a group of residents in a "solidarity mission" to look into the matter.

Pabillo said he and community leaders in the Baseco compound and Parola in Tondo tried to hold a dialogue with the soldiers. But the soldiers would not talk to them and remained on the second floor of the barangay hall, he said.

"It wasn't so much to protest but to know what was really happening. But they didn't want to talk and we heard only one side. Naturally, we will believe the reports we hear," Pabillo said.

Pabillo said he and the JPIC would continue to monitor the military's activities in Manila's barangays.

"I think the fact that the issue is now out in the open is a good thing. They (military) will be more careful now," Pabillo said.

CARDINAL ROSALES

WHAT WENT BEFORE

SINCE NOVEMBER 2006, the Armed Forces of the Philippines has deployed 26 teams, comprising a total of 260 soldiers, to selected urban poor communities in Metro Manila, supposedly for civil-military operations, like medical and dental missions.

On March 14, the AFP announced it would deploy 5,000 reservists to augment the teams.

Leftist party-list groups complained that the soldiers, with Armalites and in camouflage uniforms, were harassing their members, tearing down their election posters, and rallying the people not to vote for them in the May elections.

They expressed the fear that "militarization" of urban areas could spawn "death squads" targeting leftists.

On March 5, militant groups filed a complaint with the Commission on Elections against the AFP and other officials. Election laws prohibit soldiers from partisan political activities.

The Commission on Human Rights said the AFP had coordinated with it on the deployment of the troops.

Soldiers had been posted in Bagong Silang, Camarin and Tala in Caloocan City, some areas of Pandacan, Sta. Mesa and Tondo in Manila, and in Barangays Holy Spirit, Payatas, Batasan Hills, Bagong Silangan and Commonwealth in Quezon City.

Commonwealth has one of the largest concentrations of members of Gabriela, Bayan Muna, Anakpawis, Migrante, Anakbayan and Kabataan party-list groups.

On March 7, Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita admitted that the presence of soldiers in full battle gear was shocking. He said that the soldiers should, instead, wear general office attire. *Cyril L. Bonabente, Inquirer Research*

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Monday, March 26, 2007
Annunciation

1st Reading: Is 7:10-14
2nd Reading: Heb 10:4-10
Gospel: Luke 1:26-38

In the sixth month, the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a town of Galilee called Nazareth. He was sent to a young virgin who was betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the family of David; and the virgin's name was Mary.

The angel came to her and said, "Rejoice, full of grace, the Lord is with you." Mary was troubled at these words, wondering what this greeting could mean.

But the angel said, "Do not fear, Mary, for God has looked kindly on you. You shall conceive and bear a son and you shall call him Jesus. He will be great and shall rightly be called Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the kingdom of David, his ancestor; he will rule over the people of Jacob forever and his reign shall have no end."

Then Mary said to the angel, "How can this be if I am a virgin?" And the angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore, the holy child to be born shall be called Son of God. Even your relative Elizabeth is expecting a son in her old age, although she was unable to have a child, and she is now in her sixth month. With God nothing is impossible."

Then Mary said, "I am the handmaid of the Lord, let it be done to me as you have said." And the angel left her.

Commentary

Ahaz will not choose to obey. And he wearies God. In return he is told that a sign will be given anyway. A virgin will be with child and will bear a son who shall be named Immanuel. This is the tradition that was fulfilled in history after Ahaz and was appropriated to describe Mary and all believers who bring Immanuel into the world in our flesh and word and history. This is the day of the announcement of the Incarnation—of the coming of Emmanuel, God-with-us—into the world, in the flesh of Mary, a young woman of Nazareth. The Word of the Lord comes and she is deeply disturbed and wonders what the greeting means—and what all of this Word will mean.

Mary said yes to the coming of the messiah. And Luke uses Mary as the image of all those who hear the proclamation of the Incarnation and are deeply disturbed but say "yes" to baptism and to bearing the Word made flesh into their own bodies, lives, and history. In the midst of Jesus Emmanuel—God with us soon to be crucified—we are called to listen to the Word of God and once again commit ourselves to believing, to obeying, and to offering our bodies as sacrifice to the Lord. And say those words again, "I am the handmaid of the Lord, let it be done to me as you have said."

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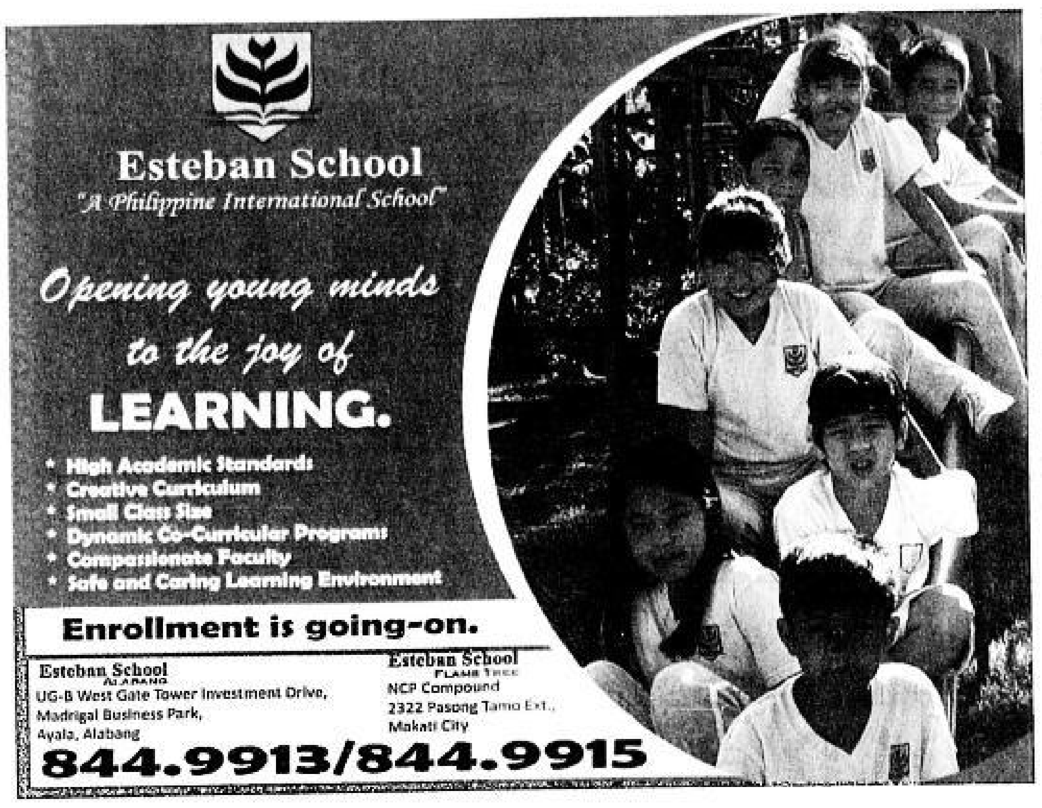

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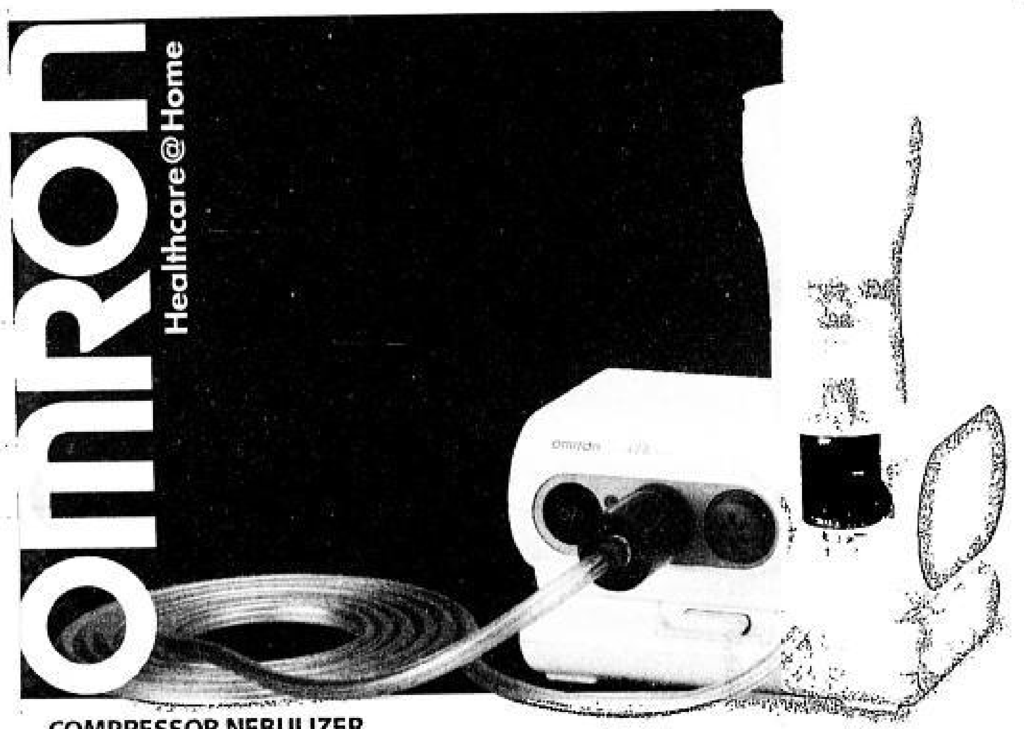

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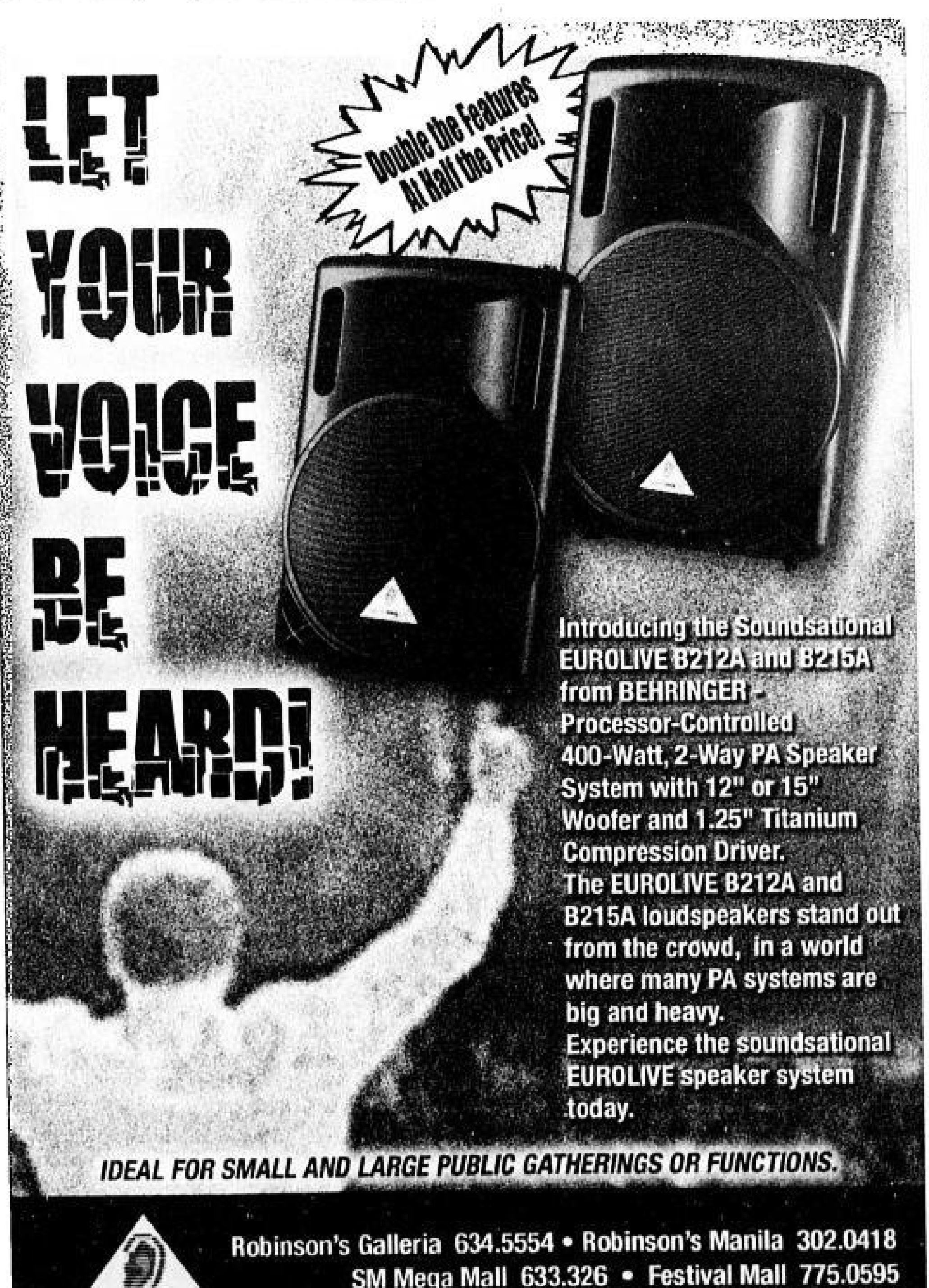

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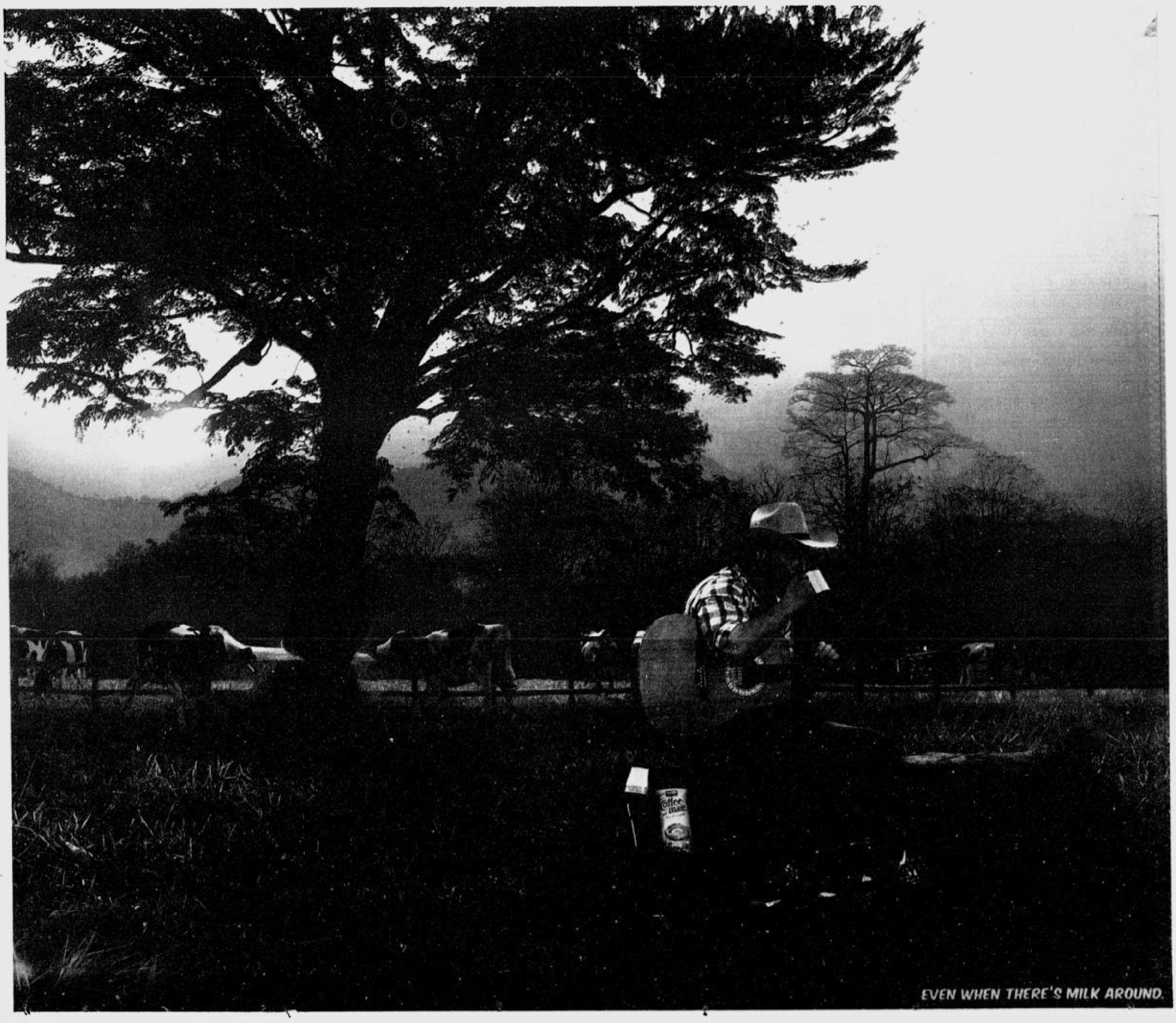
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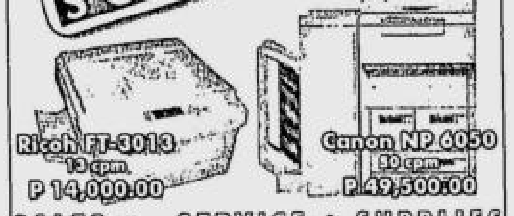

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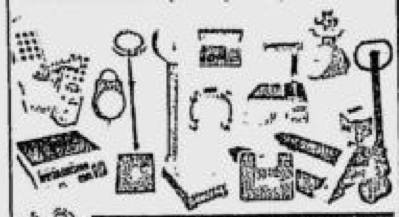

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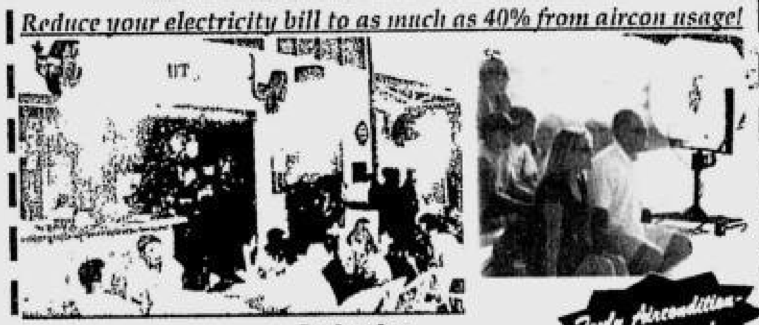

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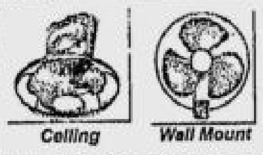

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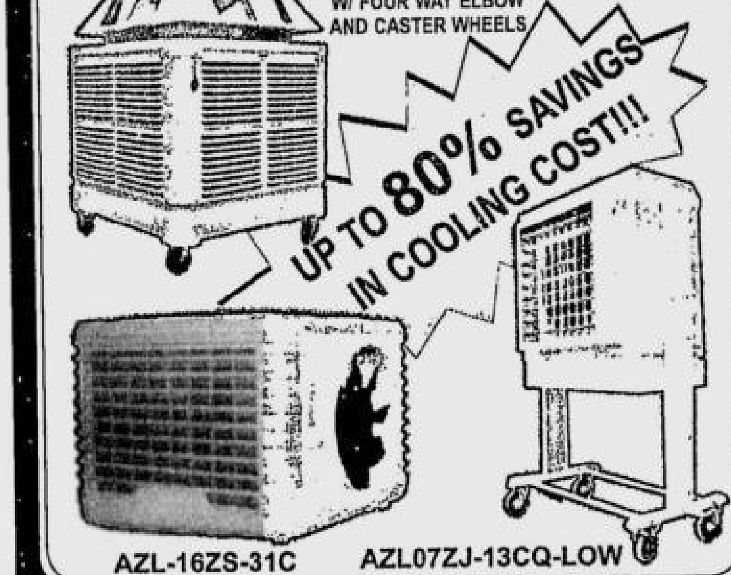

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Hungry Pinoy to get only ₱40 from fund–Osmeña

From page A1

food-for-work programs and for the feeding programs of nongovernment organizations after a survey by Social Weather Stations on Feb. 24-27 found that one in every five Filipino families had gone hungry at least once in the previous three months.

Osmeña, a senatorial candidate of the Genuine Opposition, said the SWS finding would translate to 25 million hungry Filipinos.

"If we divide P1 billion by the 25 million hungry Filipinos, each one will only receive P40. Perhaps it's good for two kilos of rice but after that you'd no longer have anything left for cooking oil, vegetables," Osmeña told reporters.

Officials of the National Anti-Poverty Commission and the Department of Social Welfare and Development defended the move to resume the feeding programs for grade schoolers and day care children from criticism that these were being used for political purposes.

Crucial to arresting hunger

NAPC head Secretary Domingo Panganiban said the food-for-school programs for kindergarten and Grade 1 pupils in public schools, and those in government-run day care centers was crucial to arresting hunger and poverty in the country.

The programs, according to Panganiban, had benefited not only schoolchildren but also their families.

"I feel that the programs are a step in the right direction, especially in alleviating hunger in Metro Manila and poor provinces," he said in an interview on Saturday, the same day Ms Arroyo ordered the release of the P1-billion fund for hunger mitigation.

"This has been going on for years," Social Welfare Secretary Esperanza Cabral said of the feeding program.

Last year, some 550,000 kindergarten and Grade 1 pupils and 250,000 day care children were given their daily ration of one kilo of rice under the program, according to the two officials. "With rice on their table, poor families only had to buy viands," Panganiban said.

Source of corruption

Two other GO candidates warned that the disbursement of the P1 billion could be a huge source of corruption.

Reelectionist Sen. Panfilo Lacson and Sorsogon Rep. Francis Escudero said the allocation might become the 2007 version of the fertilizer fund scam that allegedly financed the administration's campaign in the 2004 elections.

Osmeña and fellow GO candidates, including former Senators Loren Legarda and Anna Dominique Coseteng, went on a campaign tour of Metro Manila markets yesterday morning.

"What will solve the problem is not the P1 billion but the P265 billion taken away from our people whenever they buy goods by the (expanded value-added tax). If they want to help the poor and the hungry, the E-VAT must be junked," Osmeña said.

Band-aid solution

Osmeña has made it his campaign ploy to attack the VAT, meant to generate additional revenues for the government, whenever he speaks at political rallies and town hall-type gatherings.

"At best, it's a band-aid solution of (Ms Arroyo) to address the plight of the fast-growing number of Filipinos made hungrier under her regime. Worse, it may yet end up as a sequel to the still unresolved P728-million fertilizer scam," Lacson told the INQUIRER.

He called on Filipinos to be vigilant and watchful over how the billion-peso allocation would be disbursed.

"The question that comes to mind is, how much windfall will rice smugglers and their protectors in government get out of the millions of hungry stomachs in this country?" he said.

PR stunt

Escudero saw the billion-peso hunger fund as nothing but a public relations stunt.

"How can the allocation of P1 billion solve the problem and how will it be allocated? That might just become fertilizer fund scam part two," Escudero said.

The Department of Agriculture released an estimated P728 million for farm inputs under its Ginintuang Masaganang Ani or GMA (also the President's initials) program a few months before the presidential election in 2004. It went to allies of Ms Arroyo, who was then a presidential candidate.

Vote-buying

The militant fisherfolk group Pambansang Mamamalakaya ng Pilipinas (Pamalakaya) and peasant party-list group Anakpawis branded the President's announcement as a stunt designed to win votes for administration senatorial candidates.

"The President is engaged in massive vote-buying. Her purpose is not to combat hunger and poverty but to buy votes for her favored candidates and close political associates running in the May 14, 2007 elections," Pamalakaya chair Fernando Hicap said in a statement.

"We won't be surprised if the administration bets' campaign paraphernalia sprout around so-called mass feeding activities of the government, street sweepers uniform with candidates' initials," Anakpawis party-list Rep. Rafael Mariano said.

After months of suspending the feeding programs for lack of funds, the Department of Education and the DSWD recently resumed them following the release of P1.2 billion and P269 million in fresh funds, respectively, from the 2006 supplemental budget.

Hot meals

The DepEd is in charge of the feeding program in public schools, while the DSWD handles the program in day care centers. This is being implemented in Metro Manila and in the country's 10 poorest provinces.

"This is good for three months," Cabral said of the P269 million, pointing out that pupils would be fed milk and "hot meals" at day care centers by staff even during the summer months of April and May.

Panganiban believed that the DepEd had resumed the feeding program this month and had begun anew handing out rice to pupils in elementary schools nationwide.

But he said this would be undertaken by teachers only during the schoolyear, and not during summer break.

In the recently approved P1.126-trillion national budget, the DepEd was allotted P2 billion, and the DSWD, P750 million, for their respective feeding programs. These have yet to be released.

On top of these appropriations, the DepEd and the DSWD would get additional funding of P478 million and P180 million, respectively, from savings generated from the government's reduced debt payments, according to Panganiban.

Vitamin-fortified rice

As far as the officials knew, these funds were separate from the P1 billion that Ms Arroyo had ordered released for hunger mitigation.

"We now have Vitamin A and iron-laced rice," Panganiban said when told that the senators had specified that the DepEd distribute milk, coco-*pan de sal* and vegetable-based noodles, instead of rice, to address the malnutrition problem among schoolchildren.

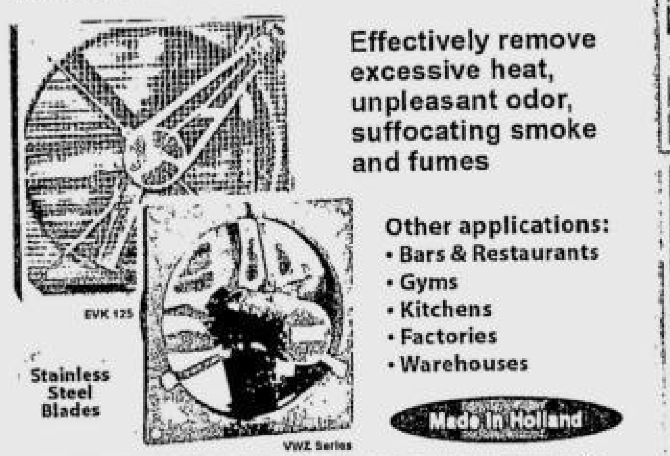
He said rice distribution would not be undertaken by teachers during the summer break to preclude suspicions this was being implemented for political purposes.

Malacañang had originally proposed P4.7 billion for DepEd's feeding program, but some senators opposed this on suspicion this would be used for political purposes.

Deadlock

To break the deadlock, both camps agreed to halve the fund, with P2.7 billion going to the department's school building program, and the balance of P2 billion to its feeding program.

Panganiban said the NAPC was fast-tracking a survey of poor families in urban centers of Metro Manila and several provinces to identify specific areas and communities where urgent government interventions were needed.



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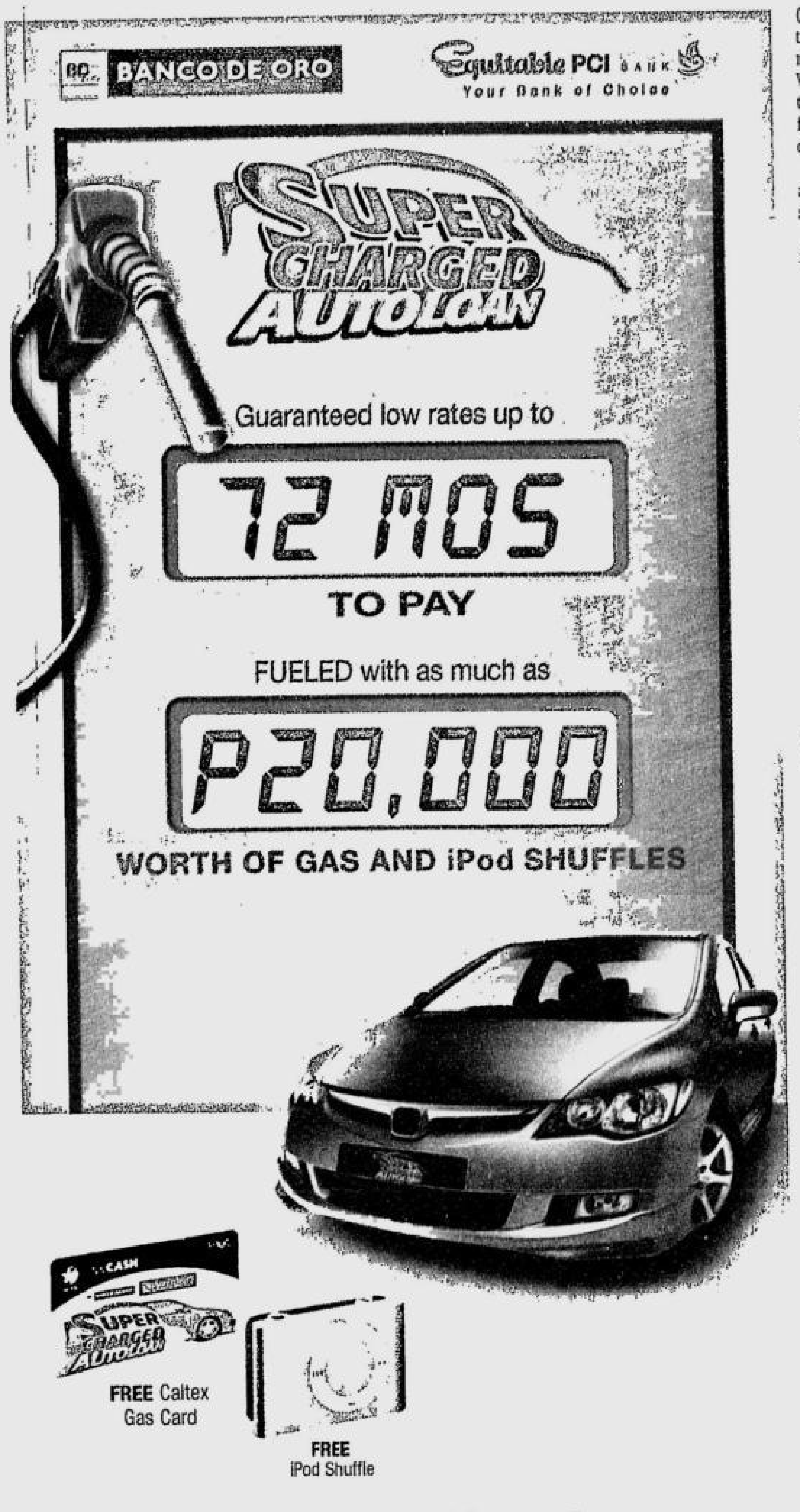
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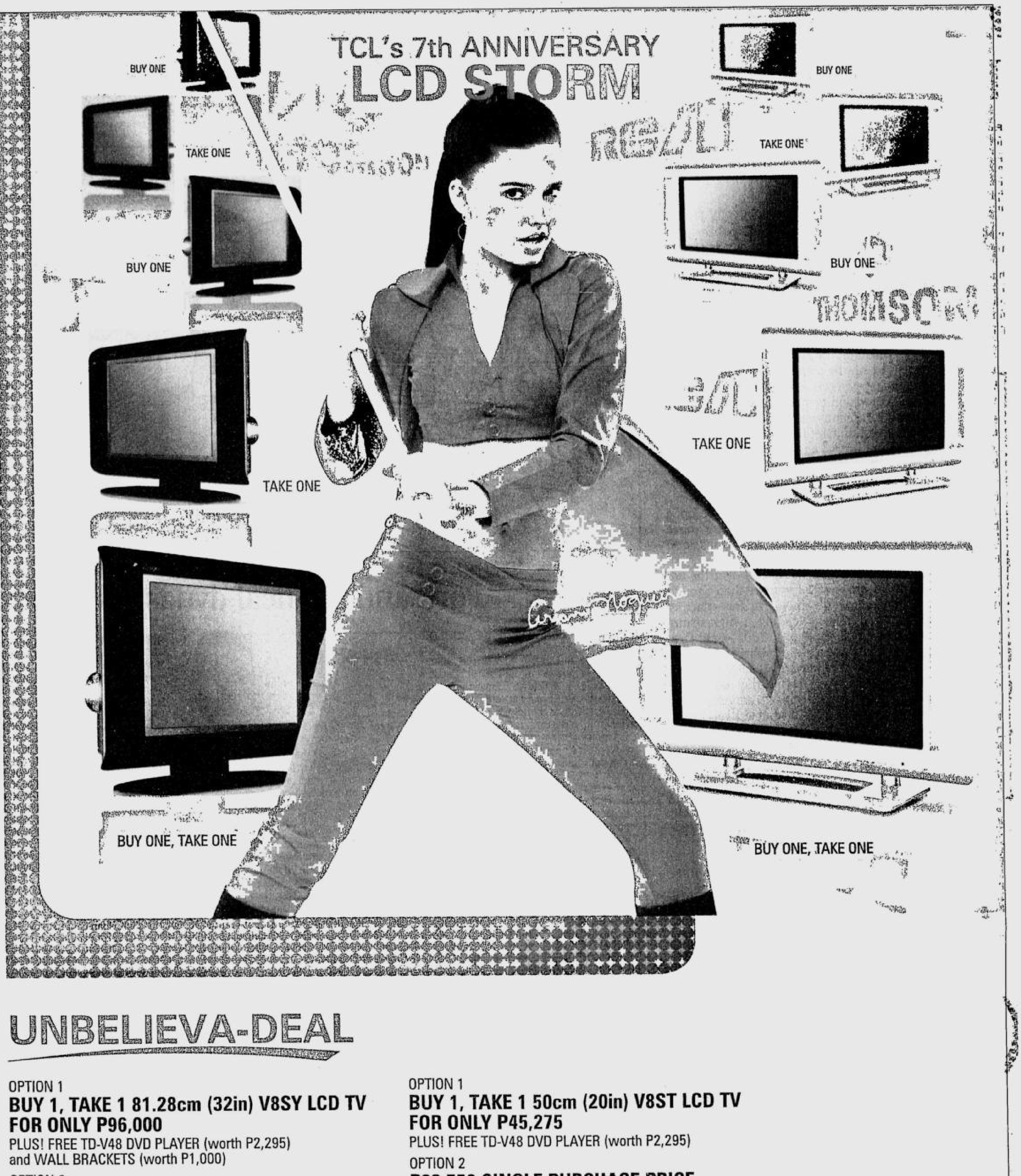

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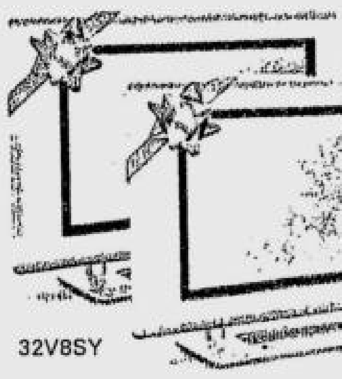
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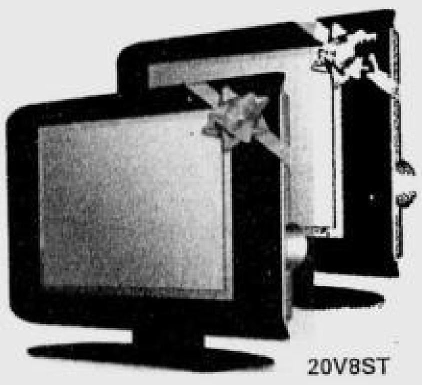
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Politics of 'sorry'

EDITORIAL

IT IS, ON REFLECTION, AN EXTRAORDINARY THING. Ex-Sen. Teresa Aquino-Oreta has issued a public apology for her behavior—specifically for her dancing on the floor of the Senate, right after the walkout of the House prosecutors aborted the Estrada impeachment trial—in the form of a television commercial.

The apology is therefore designed to be seen again and again—unlike, say, President Macapagal-Arroyo's own "I am sorry" statement in July 2005, which was shot hurriedly, aired once, and may be seen again only in the occasional TV news footage or on certain sites on the Internet.

It is an unusual campaign commercial. It begins with someone off camera (a canny stand-in for the general public) asking the question Oreta herself says there is no getting away from: "*Bakit ka nag*-dancing queen [Why did you act like a dancing queen]?"

She responds, in Filipino: "What I did was a big mistake. I want to ask for forgiveness." She tearfully expresses remorse for giving offense, and then raises the hope that it is in atoning for our mistakes that we rise above ourselves and become better persons. ["*Ngunit siguro sa mga pagkakamali, doon tayo bumabangon.*"]

Some see political calculation written all over the ad. San Juan Mayor JV Ejercito, who has more than enough in his short political career to apologize for—starting with his underreported role in leading a high-strung crowd to storm Malacañang on May 1, 2001—said Oreta's campaign commercial was a mere publicity stunt.

We find this reading hard to understand; apologies don't exactly win elections. As an image-engineering tool, an advertising campaign that brings renewed attention to a brand's weaknesses or a product's vulnerabilities breaks almost every rule of thumb. Besides, an unpopular politician never runs on his negatives; instead, he reinvents himself.

Exhibit A: Juan Ponce Enrile. In 1987, he did not apologize for his role as administrator of martial law; instead, he reinvented himself as a man of born-again faith, his campaign commercials bathed in unearthly light. In 2004, he did not apologize for his role in "laying the predicate" in the Estrada impeachment case; instead, he reinvented himself as the scourge of the PPA.

Reinvention would have been the more practical option for Oreta, whom this newspaper had relentlessly criticized not only for her controversial jig, which focused popular indignation in 2001, but also for her performance in the Senate and as a leader of the opposition in its 2004 campaign. Instead, she decided to take the road less traveled. It is an unusual journey; surely she deserves a measure of encouragement?

"I had hoped that the issue would not surface during this campaign, only to realize that such was not a reasonable expectation," she said in one interview.

So she decided to produce an ad that would meet the issue head on. "I knew it would provide me the most effective way of facing the issue and saying what is in my heart."

Despite some resistance from those close to her or who worked on her campaign, she persevered. "Some have advised against it. It bordered on imprudence, they said. But I chose to take a leap of faith and leave the consequences of the airing of the commercial in the hands of a higher being." She summed up the matter simply: "To be able to say what must be said—and to be free."

Leap of faith. Higher being. The truth that sets us free. This kind of language now comes naturally to Oreta, who was led to examine her faith and join a renewal movement precisely because of the humiliation she received from the "dancing queen" controversy. She has since become an active member of her church, and last week received the endorsement of a group of Christian evangelists who want to see more "renewed Christians" in the Senate. (The group is also endorsing the candidacies of Sen. Francis Pangilinan and Rep. Alan Peter Cayetano.)

We do not know if this new commercial will improve Oreta's chances, which do not look good. But we believe her when she says victory or political survival is not the point.

How can we tell? We have a point of comparison. When the President grudgingly apologized in 2005 for what she called a "lapse in judgment," there was no evidence of remorse, no sign of contrition. There has certainly been no fruit of a reformed life. Everything remains a matter of survival.

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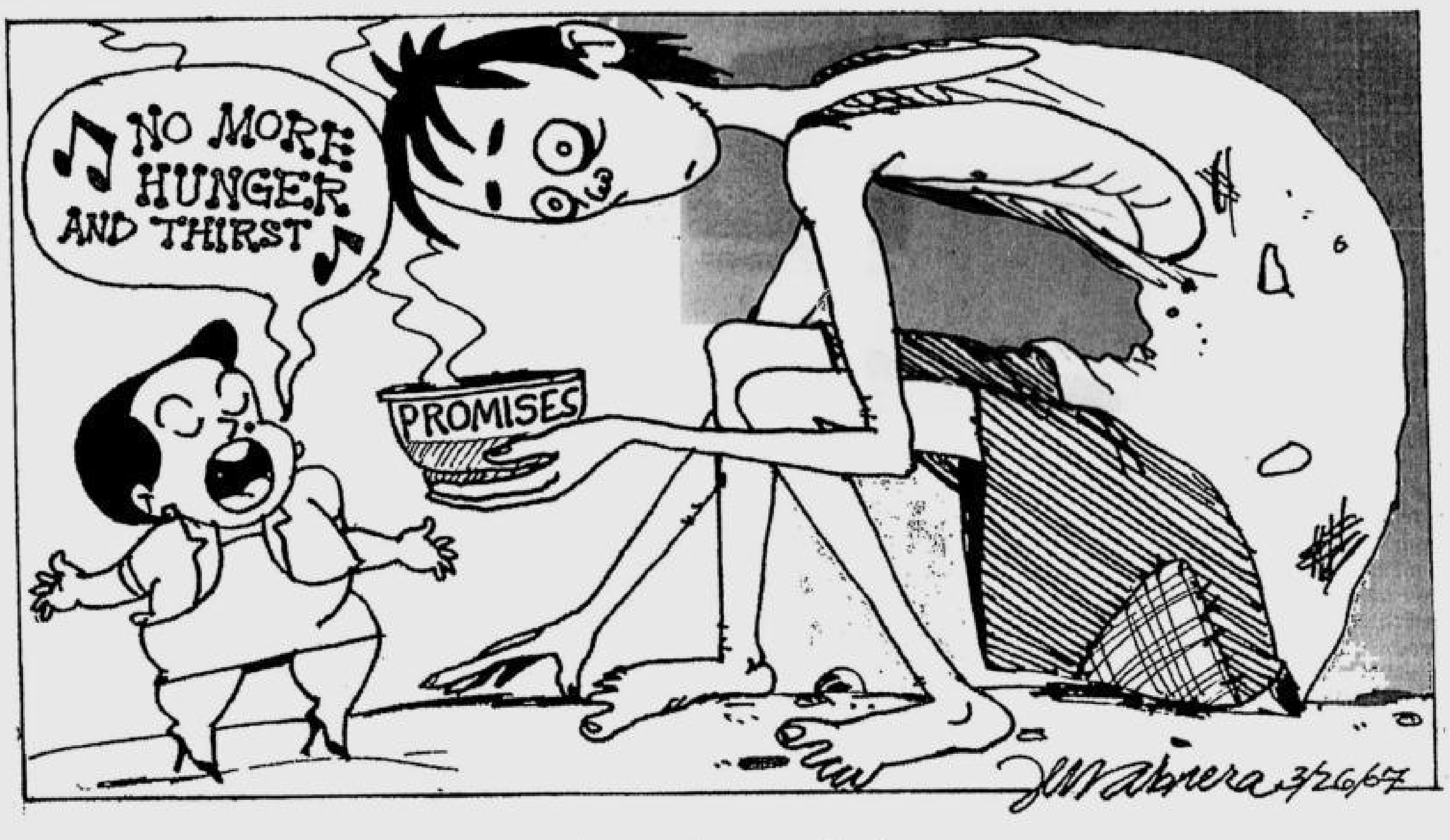


Pork and political dynasties

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

MEMBERS OF CONGRESS HAVE DOUBLED the pork barrel for themselves in the 2007 budget, from P6.240 billion to P11.445 billion. The smaller amount was the pork budget submitted by the executive department and passed by the House and the Senate; but the bicameral conference committee added P3.6 billion taken from the retirement fund of government employees. As a result, 7,000 to 8,000 employees won't get their retirement benefits, but the pork barrel of each congressman will increase from P40 million to P70 million and that of each senator to P120 million.

The chairpersons of the Senate and House contingents to the bicam are Sen. Franklin Drilon and Rep. Joey Salceda who is now Malacañang's chief of staff. Predictably, they are silent on why they did such a thing and are not answering the reporters' phone calls.

All the reelectionist senatorial and congressional candidates, with the exception of Senators Panfilo Lacson and Alfredo Lim (who is running for mayor of Manila) collect their pork barrel allocations. The pork barrel system is the dirtiest and most corrupt ploy used by public officials to steal taxpayers' money. The money is used to fund the projects of senators and congressmen but a large part (it can go up to 50 percent) of each allocation goes to the pockets of legislators and other public officials as kickbacks. The private contractors either make do with the remaining half (which is why public works projects are substandard) or overprice the projects. Either way, the taxpaying public ends up the loser.

No decent administration should have the pork barrel system because it is the fount of corruption in government. The sooner we abolish it, the better for us. But considering our legislators' greed and lack of shame, the pork barrel will not be abolished, never if we just leave them to do it. But it can be abolished if the Constitution mandates it in a very definite and clear language; and the constitutional provision should be self-enforcing, requiring no more legislation. Otherwise, the pork barrel, like the political dynasties, will stay.

Through the "pork," congressmen and senators are duplicating the functions of other executive agencies. Legislators have no business determining what road or bridge to construct; that's the job of the Department of Public Works and Highways. The job of a legislator is to pass laws, not to be a duplicate secretary of public works, education, agriculture, health, etc.

But in the Philippines, it is the congressmen or senators who determine what road, bridge or school to build in their districts. No law gives them that right. But since it is the legislators who enact the budget, they can do pretty much what they want. And unless the Constitution stops them, they will continue with the pork barrel system because it's a very lucrative—though very dirty—source of income. That is why politicians are willing to spend millions just to win an election. Once in office, they can easily recover all their election expenses from government coffers.

* * *

Another self-enforcing constitutional provision should be the ban on political dynasties. In spite of the clear intent of the Constitution, politicians violate it with impunity on the excuse that there is no enabling law. But that is only a technicality.

The framers of the Constitution clearly wanted to prohibit political dynasties, and if the current crop of our politicians had any shame, they would at least go slowly on fielding family members to run for public office. Instead, a host of them have members of their families cornering elective positions in their towns, provinces and districts. In some areas, political dynasties field as many as five family members to run for elective positions—from councilors to mayors to governors and congressmen. Husbands and wives alternate in running for mayor of their municipality. Even the party lists are being flooded with members of political families.

The Senate, supposed to be the model for integrity and responsibility, is no exception. We expected the senators to behave with more decorum and maturity, but what do we see? We have a brother running for the Senate even though his sister is already a senator; a son is also running for the Senate even though his father and namesake is still a senator. We have mother-and-son senators; a third member of the same family, a brother, would have also run for senator had not the ticket been too crowded with aspirants. Fortunately, former Sen. Tessie Aquino-Oreta doesn't have a Chinaman's chance of winning, otherwise we could also have an aunt-nephew tandem in the Senate. If former Sen. John Osmeña wins, there will be two Osmeñas (cousins) in the 24-man Senate.

Look at the unfairness of it all: There are 86 million Filipinos; there are only 24 senators, yet members of only four families could occupy a third of the Senate seats.

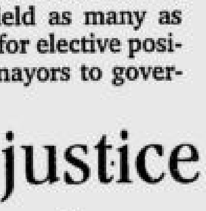
The argument that it is up to the people to vote or not to vote for members of a political dynasty does not wash. That is not a good excuse. The people can easily be swayed by the feudal techniques of political families. Besides, all public officials have the moral obligation to obey the spirit of the Constitution. Public officials take an oath to obey, protect and implement the fundamental law of the land. The Constitution is clear: there is a prohibition on political dynasties, period. That there is no enabling law against political dynasties is not a good excuse for ignoring the constitutional intent.

I am not in favor of tinkering with the Constitution so soon, but if it has to be amended, the ban on political dynasties should be phrased in such a way that it should be self-enforcing. And a ban on the pork barrel system should be added, which should also be made self-enforcing.

Justice for Satur, justice for all

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros



THE GALL OF THESE PEOPLE!

Eduardo Ermita says *sori na lang*: Satur Ocampo would have been spared the attentions the authorities are showering him now if he had merely availed of the amnesty offered by Presidents Aquino and Ramos during their time. Raul Gonzalez choruses, tsk, tsk, Ocampo is not covered by the amnesty given by the two past presidents simply because he did not apply for it. "If the President grants amnesty," he says philosophically, "you must apply."

What arrant nonsense.

At the very least, what's wrong with it is what Ocampo himself has to say about it. He never applied for the amnesty because he never committed the crimes he was accused of. Why on earth, or hell, should he ask to be pardoned for a crime he did not commit? Indeed, why on earth, or on any other planet, should he admit to a crime he did not commit?

It's the third time now, says Ocampo, that he has been accused of these crimes—during Marcos' time when he was in detention; during Cory's time when he was again in detention; and now during Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's time, for which he has been put in detention. And each time, the case against him failed. I thought we proscribed double jeopardy? I thought we observed the principle that a man may not be tried for the same case twice? This isn't double jeopardy, this is triple jeopardy!

What makes Ermita's and Gonzalez's statements doubly stupid is that they openly suggest that Ocampo is not being accused of an ordinary crime but of a **political** one. One committed in the course of pursuing a political cause and, therefore, deserving of amnesty. If Ocampo were truly guilty of murder in the sense that we normally understand it, in the sense of the spectacle we are being regaled with today (journalists and political activists are being routinely gunned down by assassins), why should he be pardoned whether there is amnesty or not? The killers of James Rowe were not. If Ocampo fell in the same category, then he should rot in hell, or in jail. Ermita and Gonzalez themselves suggest he does not belong in either.

What makes their statements galling is more than the smugness with which they say them. What makes them so is the way they or the government they represent presume to sit in judgment over Ocampo. They should not be judging, they should be judged.

I do know someone who has committed a monumental crime, a crime far worse than the murder of a person, or even the wholesale slaughter of an entire tribe. That is the murder of a nation, that is the murder of a people. Or what is but the same thing, that is the murder of democracy, that is the murder of freedom. I do know someone who admitted that crime, albeit with every effort to mislead the public about it. I do know someone who applied for pardon for it, saying robotically "I…am…sorry…", notwithstanding that the ultimate rulers of this country, who are the People, have not issued a proclamation of amnesty and who certainly would not have included that crime among those pardonable by God or man even if they had done so.

I do know someone who has not been or will ever be covered by any amnesty. I do know someone who has asked to be pardoned for the mother of all crimes, but has not been pardoned for it or can ever be pardoned for it.

But she has not been prosecuted or harassed like Satur Ocampo. She has been installed in office and, like Marcos, praised by her fawners. She does not have a tiny cell in Muntinlupa, she has an office that dwarfs her in Malacañang.

But far more than any of these, the spectacle of GMA, Ermita, Gonzalez and ilk presuming to sit in judgment over Satur Ocampo is not unlike Imelda Marcos, Fabian Ver, Juan Ponce Enrile and ilk presuming to sit in judgment over Corazon Aquino. The fact that Ocampo is being accused of crimes he apparently committed during martial law only calls attention to who Ocampo and his accusers were during martial law and what contributions they've made to this country.

Ocampo was a journalist who, finding that the sword could be an ally of the pen, risked life and limb to join a group that was fighting to liberate this country from dictatorship. For which pains he was caught, tortured and detained for a good many years of his life, while trumped-up charges were filed against him as they were against everyone who tried to cut down the barbed wire strung across this country. By all rights, Ocampo should be hailed a hero for fighting and helping to restore this country's freedoms, along with all those who died or were scarred for life for doing the same thing—Left, Right, or Center, it doesn't matter. And by all rights, all those self-proclaimed heroes that sprouted after the bells pealed victory should be dragged to Bagumbayan and made to share Rizal's fate minus the reverence.

What contributions Ermita, Gonzalez and ilk made during that time only they know. Indeed, what they were doing at that time, other than scratching the globules dangling down their apparent manhood, only they know. It's criminal enough that we've never given people like Ocampo their due for what they've done to end a tyranny. It's an absolute atrocity that they should be pilloried for it by people who may not hold up a cigarette lighter—never mind candle—to them.

During those dark years of martial law, we had a phrase that perfectly captured our common plight of oppression and our perception that a humongous injustice done to one person—Left, Right, or Center, it did not matter—was a humongous injustice done to us all. That phrase was, "Justice for Ninoy, justice for all." In these dark years of de facto martial law, we have a phrase that does the same thing:

"Justice for Satur, justice for all."

Of amnesty and libel

SOUNDING BOARD

Fr. Joaquin G. Bernas, S.J.

WHY WRITE ABOUT AMNESTY AND LIBEL? The answer is simple: they have been front-page material in the past few days.

For a while some people were suggesting that Rep. Satur Ocampo might use as his defense the amnesty granted by President Corazon Aquino and later by President Fidel Ramos. But it now turns out that Representative Ocampo did not avail of the amnesty; not only that, he would not even want to avail of it. Why so?

The answer lies in the hazards of amnesty as jurisprudence has explained it. Amnesty is defined as the grant of general pardon to a class of political offenders. Under the Constitution, it may be granted by the executive only with the concurrence of the legislature. It is therefore both an executive and a legislative act. However, unlike pardon which can be granted only after final conviction, amnesty may be granted either after conviction or even before the charges are filed. It may thus be seen as more generous than pardon.

But there is a hitch which makes people hesitate to avail of amnesty. To avail of amnesty, one must admit guilt. The accepted doctrine prevailing today was first pronounced by Justice Pedro Tuason, who said: "The writer of this decision maintained in previous decisions, contrary to the view of the majority of the Court, that it is rank inconsistency for one to justify an act, or seek forgiveness for an act, which according to him, he has not committed; that amnesty presupposes the commission of a crime and that when an accused says he has not committed a crime he cannot have any use for amnesty; that where an amnesty proclamation imposes certain conditions, as in this case, it is incumbent upon the accused to prove the existence of such conditions; that a petition for amnesty is in the nature of a plea of confession and avoidance, under which principle the pleader has to confess the allegations against him before he can be allowed to set out matters which, if true, would defeat the action."

This is now the prevailing doctrine. Quite obviously, Ocampo has refused to admit guilt.

What about libel? First Gentleman Mike Arroyo has been firing libel suits left and right. What are the chances that he can win the cases he has filed? We must look at this in the light of what jurisprudence has in recent years accepted. The impression I have is that it is very difficult to win libel cases, especially for public officials and public figures.

Libel is usually understood as a malicious and public, defamatory imputation against a person. To win a libel case, malice must be shown. The general rule, moreover, is that every defamatory imputation is presumed to be malicious. Thus the accuser does not have to prove malice. It is the accused who must prove that there was no malice in the imputation. But over the years, a new doctrine developed: if the object of the defamatory imputation is a public officer or a "public person," such person must prove "actual malice" if he is to win a libel suit. And actual malice is defined as defamatory imputation that is made with knowledge that it is false or with reckless disregard of whether it is false or not.

Public officers have the burden of proving "actual malice" against their defamers. One reason given for shifting the burden to them is that they have the resources to contest the accusation against them. You would therefore think that this doctrine would apply only to relatively high ranking officers. But our Supreme Court has applied the doctrine even to a lowly barangay captain!

What about "public figures"? Why include them in the new rule if they are private persons? The answer that has been given is this: "If a matter is a subject of public interest, it cannot suddenly become less so merely because a private individual is involved, or because in some sense the individual did not 'voluntarily' choose to become involved. The public's primary interest is in the event; the public focus is on the conduct of the participant and the content, effect, and significance of the conduct, not the participant's prior anonymity or notoriety." And again: "We honor the commitment to robust debate on public issues . . . by extending constitutional protection to all discussion and communication involving matters of public or general concern, without regard to whether the persons involved are famous or anonymous."

But who are public figures? Does Mike Arroyo come under the category of a public figure? The court will have to decide this before it begins to look into the evidence.

Jurisprudence distinguishes between the "pervasive public figure" and the "limited public figure." The pervasive public figure is one whose name has become a household word. It is thought that such a personality has access to media to rebut defamatory attacks and has voluntarily thrust himself into the public spotlight.

The limited public figure, however, is not easily identified. One view that is followed sets down two requirements. First, the defamatory imputation must involve public controversy. Thus, for instance, imputation of adultery is not a matter of public controversy unless, perhaps, it is related to public office.

Second, the person's involvement in the controversy must be voluntary.

In my view, Mike Arroyo will easily qualify as a "pervasive public figure" and will bear the burden of proving actual malice on the part of those he has accused. His lawyers will be kept busy.

Manahan kin wins in Hawaii

COMMENTARY

Belinda A. Aquino

HONOLULU—PHILIPPINE POLITICS THRIVES IN foreign shores generations later.

Manuel P. Manahan was a Filipino political stalwart in the '50s and '60s who was closely identified with the late President Ramon Magsaysay. Manahan himself would run for president under a third party called the Progressive Party of the Philippines after Magsaysay died in a plane crash in 1957.

Manahan and his colleague, Raul Manglapus, were champions of local autonomy and they coauthored the Decentralization Act of 1967. The two were idealistic politicians whose advocacy enhanced the role of local units in national politics. They also worked closely with the United States in development efforts during the Cold War.

Both Manahan and Manglapus have passed on, but the former's spirit lives on in Hawaii two generations later. Manahan's grandnephew, Joey Manahan, was elected last November to represent the 29th district of Honolulu, which is heavily populated by Filipinos and Filipino-Americans. The election was a cliffhanger with Manahan winning by only 11 votes! He won over another Fil-Am candidate, the son of incumbent Honolulu City Councilman Romy Cachola, who had represented the district several terms in the past.

New in the district, Manahan at first looked like a carpetbagger but he persevered. He was clearly the underdog as the Cacholas have lived in this mainly Filipino district for many years.

Manahan walked the district every day day shaking hands and testing his two-bit Ilocano in a district that is at least 80 percent Ilocano. The race was billed as a contest between Ilocos versus Manila politics. But Manahan had a ready answer. Manuel Manahan's maternal side (Perez) originated from Tagudin, Ilocos Sur. That's a stretch, but it helped in his campaign.

Borrowing from Philippine politics, Manahan even imported his friend, movie actor Piolo Pascual, to attract voters to his fund-raiser. In American politics, citizens and voters contribute to someone's campaign, not the other way around.

Like any celebrity, Piolo drew crowds and potential donors. Piolo's presence certainly boosted Manahan's visibility in the campaign.

Manahan is his own person, of course, and he's not banking on his pedigree to advance his political career. He's a self-made man devoid of the arrogance and self-indulgence of the rich and famous. His story is a bit sad but compelling.

He was born in Makati in 1971. He attended La Salle Greenhills until the fourth grade. When he was only 10 years old, his mother decided Joey would have a brighter future if they left the Philippines.

They moved to the San Francisco Bay Area where Joey attended Sacred Heart's School in Menlo Park until the 8th grade. He later went to Bellarmine College Preparatory High School where he struggled with his own identity. When his mother remarried in Hawaii, he went to a community college in California. He went to as far away as Houston, Texas in search of himself.

He rejoined his mother in Hawaii in 1991. Hawaii was his second home and this quelled his restlessness a bit. It gave him a more stable sense of family. And in 1993 he decided to finish college and enrolled at the University of Hawaii at Manoa. That was when I first met him as one of our students in Philippine and Ethnic Studies.

He worked with "Operation Manong," a volunteer university program started by Amy Agbayani. The program was designed to help tutor immigrant children from the Philippines who had adjustment problems in Hawaii's public schools. Amy would later introduce him to Rep. Dennis Arakaki, who served as his mentor. His stint with Arakaki was his first taste of how politics plays out in Hawaii. Later, he worked with another Fil-Am legislator, state Sen. Donna Mercado-Kim.

Manahan considers that period in his life as another landmark. Studying about the Philippines and its history and culture, along with his volunteer work, restored his lost identity and strengthened the Filipino in him. "Ethnicity" was a new term, but he soon internalized it. Learning about his cultural heritage gave him a sense of personal renewal.

When I first met him at the University of Hawaii, the first question I asked him was whether he was related to Manuel Manahan. "He was my granduncle, the brother of my grandfather, but I also called him *Lolo*," he replied. I couldn't help commenting, "Small world." I was seeing another Manahan two generations later.

Joey has had his share of tragedy. His grandfather was the famous St. Luke's obstetrician, Dr. Constantino Manahan, who was also one of the pioneers of Makati Medical Center. His wife, Joey's grandmother, was even more famous—the late Elvira Manahan was a TV host back when very few women were in television.

One morning in the mid-'80s, Elvira Manahan was shot to death in her own home while her husband was away. Two others in the household were also shot. The whole country was shocked.

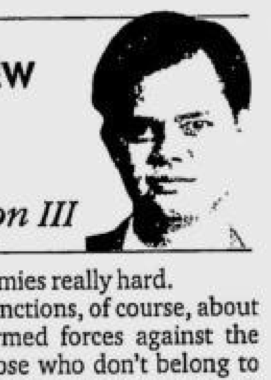
"I was only 15 years old," Joey recalled ruefully. "You can imagine how devastating that was for me." His grandfather, Dr. Manahan, died two years later with a broken heart.

With all that behind him, he faces his new persona as assistant majority floor leader and vice chair of the Committee on Tourism and Culture, with courage and hope. Some of his constituents have noted his charisma, his pleasant temperament, the kind that never gets angry, they say. As one of the young legislators of Filipino ancestry in Hawaii, he has a whole bright future ahead of him. Largely because, in my opinion, he has actually found himself and has achieved a strong moral capital to press on.

Belinda A. Aquino, a political scientist, is professor and director of Philippine Studies at the University of Hawaii at Manoa.

Diminished leaders

THE LONG VIEW



Manuel L. Quezon III

IN HIS AUTOBIOGRAPHY, DIOSDADO MACAPAGAL wrote, "The greatness of a ruler lies in his ability to exercise restraint in the use of tremendous power. The essence of a democrat consists of the patience to secure his wishes through the complex machinery of the system of checks and balances which is the indispensable life-blood of the democratic system, and not through the expediency of crushing all opposition. The essential trait of a democracy is not power but responsibility, not authority but duty."

It would be easy to say that Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, as chief executive, has not lived up to the standard of leadership set by her father. But Sen. Joker Arroyo, for one, says she has. He has pointed out (to defend, of course, his decision to run under GMA's Team Unity) that much as he had been a pain in the neck when it came to her executive issuances, the President never used her position to put pressure on him; and, anyway, what she has done, he essentially has agreed with—that is, to make life difficult for those clamoring for people power and for the fall of her presidency; or for those who support ideologies traditionally opposed to anything and everything our Fifth Republic stands for.

As far as that goes, it's a fair statement. The President, by instinct, belongs to the old political culture that keeps its hands off its enemies who also hold office. Meting out reward and punishment was—is—straightforward, involving the pork barrel. Any harassment would strictly be small potatoes—say, arresting someone for crossing the street, without detaining him for very long, but never really letting a case reach the point of being filed.

In contrast, the Estrada era began with the disappearance of the man said to have video-taped Erap gambling, and ended with the disappearance of a political public relations fixer at odds with him. Not to mention the use of the BIR against his enemies and advertising boycotts.

In contrast, President Arroyo, even when business was being critical of her, never hit the businessmen where they'd hurt: their pocketbooks; and except for the Left, she has avoided many opportunities to hit her enemies really hard.

She has had no compunctions, of course, about using the police and armed forces against the poor, the obscure, or those who don't belong to her social and political circles. But then, again, it can be argued that few presidents have ever had such scruples. What sets her administration apart is that it lacks two fundamental things that a president needs to get away with such acts: a large mandate; and the ability to present herself as the personification of the country's destiny.

During a break at Media Nation 4.1, someone (a partisan of the President) observed that the presidency as an institution is much diminished, meaning, that our historical expectations of the presidency, as well as our traditional assumptions of the President's influence, no longer apply. To me, that view suggested something notable—sad, but perhaps quite true: the era of the great leader is past, and it might be unrealistic for us—that is, we, the people—to expect greatness in our leaders. To that extent, the President was on to something when she said, at the beginning of her presidency, that she aspired to being a "good," never mind "great," President.

The person who made this observation made another one in a different forum we both attended: In many ways, because of the trauma of the martial law years, our present system is designed to prevent an overly strong leader from emerging. In the process, this guarantees that practically no president will be able to lead effectively.

The traditional strengths of the presidency haven't been there for some time: a majority and not plurality mandate, and a party machinery solid enough to last at least as long as an administration's term. The last time a president achieved an unquestionable majority was in 1965; the last real landslide was in 1969. Since then, the best percentage a post-Edsa president has managed was 39.6 percent (Estrada in 1998). But this only put him on a par with the most underwhelming presidency of the Third Republic, that of Carlos P. Garcia, lone plurality president of his time, who obtained 41.3 percent (over time, it's the percentage, not the number of votes that matters, since our population is always increasing).

As for party machinery, the one Ramos built didn't survive his presidency, and neither did Estrada's coalition; the current one is devouring its own children in the Lakas-Kampi conflict.

In retrospect, it's even more understandable now why the President was so insistent on a million-vote margin of victory instead of, simply, a victory. Since 2001, she had realized how wide the gulf between the mythic place of the presidency and its diminished reality has become. It is a lesson those jockeying to succeed her may be coming to realize, now. Try as anyone might, on both sides of the aisle, public participation in our politics may have already peaked.

In the Senate race, fellow Inquirer Current blogger John Nery points out something interesting. A survey score in the low to mid 30s got Honasan in the 13th place in 2004; today, rating lower, the mid to high 20s, it's enough to put Honasan in 11th place. A candidate can therefore do more, with less; but the relevant fact here is that this means all the candidates will have to do more with less—public support, that is.

Diminished expectations, diminishing returns: the fight can only get more vicious as fewer people get involved and—whichever side they may be swayed to—get smaller in number but more crucial.

Debased and degenerate? As far as describing the system, the President was correct; but so far, so have been the solutions—except the tried and tested and true way of elections.

Perfidy in our foreign service

REVEILLE

Ramon J. Farolan

I WOULD HAVE WANTED TO PUT TO REST THE ISSUE OF former Ambassador Lauro Baja Jr.'s desire to continue as our country's Permanent Representative to the United Nations. But important and disturbing documents, affecting the honor and prestige of our country, have only recently come to light, which put this sordid affair in a completely different perspective.

Our readers will recall that last Jan. 14, former Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr. was sworn into office as the Philippines' new Permanent Representative to the United Nations. Subsequently, an order reassigning Baja to the home office was issued a few days later. As early as April 2006, it had already been widely reported in the media that President Macapagal-Arroyo had nominated retired Chief Justice Davide to be our Permanent Representative to the United Nations. It was not as though the whole process was railroaded like other incidents we have witnessed in our political system.

Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo informed UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon that Davide was the new Philippine representative to the organization.

Now comes the shocker.

On Feb. 8, without specific instructions from Manila and for reasons known only to himself, Baja wrote three letters in his capacity as our Permanent Representative to the United Nations.

The first was addressed to Ambassador Dalius Cekuolis, president of the Economic and Social Council (Ecosoc) and concurrent Permanent Representative of Lithuania to the United Nations:

Dear Ambassador Cekuolis,

I wish to inform you that I am being reassigned to the Philippines. In this connection, I have asked Ambassador Kenzo Oshima, the Permanent Representative of Japan to the United Nations, to take my place as Vice President of Ecosoc, to represent Asia in the bureau of the Council.

Ambassador Oshima has graciously accepted this arrangement.

The Chairman of the Asian group has been informed accordingly. Ambassador Oshima will attend the next meeting of the bureau.

I thank you and the other members of the bureau and the Secretariat for your assistance and kindness during my brief but meaningful tenure in the bureau of the Council.

With warmest regards.

Sincerely yours,
Lauro L. Baja, Jr.
Permanent Representative

The second letter was addressed to Ambassador Baatar Choisuren, chairman of the Asian Group and Permanent Representative of Mongolia to the United Nations:

Dear Ambassador Choisuren,

I wish to inform you that I am being reassigned to the Philippines. In this connection, I have asked Ambassador Kenzo Oshima, the Permanent Representative of Japan to the United Nations to take my place as Vice President at Ecosoc to represent Asia in the bureau of the Council, which Ambassador Oshima has graciously accepted. I would therefore appreciate it if the members of the Asian Group could be informed accordingly for its appropriate action.

With best regards,

Sincerely yours,
Lauro L. Baja, Jr.
Permanent Representative

Employing a more informal and intimate salutation, he wrote a third letter to Ambassador Kenzo Oshima, Permanent Representative of Japan to the United Nations:

Dear Kenzo, [N.B.: Name is in longhand.]

I wish to furnish you with a copy of my letter to the President of Ecosoc and the Chairman of the Asian Group. Thank you for your assistance on this matter.

With warmest regards,

Sincerely yours,
Lauro L. Baja, Jr.
Permanent Representative

* * *

Here we have a veteran diplomat of our country who has been given the great honor and rare privilege of representing the Philippines in other countries around the world. He was the beneficiary of the Filipino taxpayer who made sure that he was properly supported in his needs and requirements for maintaining a decent standard of living comparable with those of diplomats from most other nations.

In the twilight of his career, he offered a position reserved for the Philippines to the representative of another country as though he had proprietary rights to the post, as though he had the prerogative to transfer it to someone of his choice. This he did despite knowing full well that his successor was on the way to replace him.

In the Armed Forces, when a subordinate officer is relieved from his post, he will never leave it until he is properly replaced; and until such time, he will continue to carry out his unit's mission to the very end. If, by chance, he'd turn over command of the unit to another officer belonging to a different unit, without clearance or instructions from higher HQ, he would be subject to court martial. In a shooting war, he could even be executed by firing squad for putting at risk the lives of his men and the successful accomplishment of the unit's mission.

In his last letter to this writer, Baja said, "I have no doubt that I left the stage while the audience (was) still applauding." I dare say that the audience—far from applauding—must be wondering why a Filipino diplomat was offering the vice presidency of Ecosoc (held by the Philippines) to the Japanese representative.

This incident must not be allowed to just fade away. At the very least, Secretary Romulo should set up a board of inquiry to look into the actuations of Baja and hold him accountable. And the first step is to recall Baja and require him to explain his actions. The inquiry will also give Baja an opportunity to defend himself. In this manner, the truth will be known to our people.

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Brother Mike's rare leadership

WHEN CATHOLICS FELT A NEED to celebrate the Mass in ways that most parishes did not, Brother Mike Velarde's El Shaddai movement flourished. Our parishes had become exclusionary—members had taken to forming their own cliques and the less fortunate and less propertied (impoverished) neighbors became less accepted in brotherly love.

"Independent" Christian groups tended to be more welcoming. The El Shaddai blew in like a breath of fresh air. Has anyone seen even a small parish with members ready to jump and dance and sing like this wonderful group, with or without eggs or anything to share, coming together only with the knowledge and belief that someone will come through—no one gets out of that crowd staring only at those who have something to eat or drink—someone will share the little bit of morsel they can afford to take? These faithful get to feel a bit of the spirit of sharing among early Christians.

Brother Mike made Jesus alive to these members, and the "outsiders" who feel edified by, and even envious of, such experience can only watch them (perhaps join them from their living rooms) on TV. These members seek leadership and I am glad to hear that Brother Mike has offered to guide them and narrow down their choices come May elections. I do not know why I still expected the bishops to provide the leadership that they had generally failed to provide in the past.

Let's have that short list (1) to guide church members desiring to live in Christ, (2) to elect those who might help us in our search of truth, (3) to reject satanic cheating, lying and stealing, (4) to reject social injustices and the murder of those who express their frustrations with this corrupt and oppressive regime, (5) to see through the manipulations and injustices that perpetuate poverty and the inequitable distribution of our country's wealth, (6) to exclude the candidates who are not committed to serve those most in need, even as they vow to uphold the law and the Constitution on which democracy is founded.

Maybe, we should pray for these bishops that they may wake up to realize what they are doing or not doing for the flock that they are committed to tend, feed and guide. Or are we to understand that these shepherds had altogether left the 99 to care only for the one doggedly clinging to the Palace by the dirty Pasig River?

—AURORA RIEL,
aurora_riel@yahoo.com

LETTERS PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

Economic growth for the rotten rich

THERE WILL BE ECONOMIC growth in the Philippines for as long as there is corruption: the corrupt rich will continue to get richer.

Corruption as part of Filipino culture is not due to "Original Sin." It is due to Christianity. Indeed, why bother with the creation of a sane and a healthy society?

Or respecting law and order? Or why bother with progress for a people and maturity for a nation; after all, there is always the forgiveness of sin and the forgiveness of crime available any time from the Christian priesthood industry?

—POCH SUZARA,
pocholosuzara@yahoo.com

Esperon's anti-Red hysteria

THE TRUMPED-UP CHARGES and cruel treatment of Rep. Satur Ocampo are meant to harass not just him but also the party-list system. The real motive behind his arrest is not justice for the victims of the communist purge but the persecution of militant party-list groups. If the Arroyo regime succeeds in incarcerating Ocampo and paralyzing the campaign of Bayan Muna, then other party-list groups are next in line.

We offer to Ocampo of Bayan Muna and Crispin Beltran of Anakpawis our hand of solidarity. The Left must stand as one body and speak with one voice on this life-and-death issue. We should sit down together with other advocates of civil liberties and labor rights to find ways of defending Ka Satur, Ka Bel and human rights.

The actions of the government and the military belie their words of assurance that they are not out to undermine the electoral participation of militant party-lists. In fact, while other Cabinet members are acting as good cops, AFP Chief of Staff Gen. Hermogenes Esperon Jr. and National Security Adviser Norberto Gonzales are playing bad cops.

Esperon is no longer in denial, he has admitted that he wants communism outlawed and suspected communists arrested, and he has confessed that soldiers have been deployed in urban communities to conduct anti-insurgency operations.

Esperon has now ousted Maj. Gen. Jovito Palparan as the spokesperson of the government's anti-communist hysteria. His declaration is a virtual order to the chain of command to intensify the crackdown on people's organizations and militant party-lists. This Marcos fascist wannabe must resign immediately.

—ROMY CABUGNASON,
Partido ng Manggagawa,
5 Matiyaga St.,
Barangay Central, Quezon City

WB-IMF mantra stunts RP democracy, progress

I DISAGREE WITH WASHINGTON SYCIP'S view that we failed to develop because of political freedoms anchored on the Western model of democracy. (INQUIRER, 3/19/07)

Economic development—which requires industrialization and agricultural modernization—is not a matter of choosing between Western democracy and Asian authoritarianism. Regardless of political systems, no country will develop if it is blindly obedient to the World Bank-International Monetary Fund-Washington mantra of import liberalization, deregulation, privatization and level playing field. A country with an economy anchored on these precepts will have a minimalist role for government, which is another way of saying that government should stand aside, disarm itself or do nothing while private greed rapes public interest.

Unfortunately for us, our presidents, from the first Macapagal up to the second, have all been obedient to the WB-IMF. President Diosdado Macapagal lifted import and foreign exchange controls that, during the 1950s, had propelled the Philippines to being second only to Japan in Asia's race for development. In its place, he installed decontrol and devaluation. "after consultation with and approval by the (IMF)."

President Ferdinand Marcos established a "free flow" policy that allowed foreign investments to be repatriated, profits remitted and "frozen dollars" withdrawn anytime. He also acceded to a WB recommendation for the Philippines "to reduce the average tariff level."

President Corazon Aquino saw import liberalization as "the best way of ensuring the emergence of world-competitive and efficient enterprises."

However, Macapagal, Marcos and Aquino were picayune compared to President Fidel Ramos. Blind faith in free trade and globalization reached its apogee during his presidency. To him, "for Philippine industry to emerge, we should liberalize imports, reduce and eventually remove protective tariffs, and open our markets to investments, products, ideas and opportunities."

When multinational corporations (Johnson and Johnson, Colgate-Palmolive, Pfizer, Union Carbide, etc.) shut down their manufacturing activities and shifted their operations to mere trading, President Joseph Estrada's Trade Secretary Jose Pardo just said, "They should drop dead."

Today, after 12 miserable years of insane commitments to the GATT-WTO, the Arroyo regime is rushing into numerous bilateral and multilateral free trade agreements without any clear effort to prepare the country for competition, as if the treason-informed Electric Power Industry Reform Act, Impsa, the Mining Act of 1995 and the EVAT are not enough.

The economic policies of the Marcos government, an authoritarian regime, and the governments of the first Macapagal, Aquino, Ramos and Estrada, all of which supposedly characterized by democratic space, were identical in their obedience to the IMF-WB. The same is true with the Arroyo regime, although it would be hard to call it democratic in the light of the massive murders that have occurred in the name of ideological cleansing.

—AMADO GAT INCIONG,
145 15th Avenue, Cubao, Quezon City

Theft no longer shameful

I LOVE READING CONRADO DE QUIROS complain about the Arroyo administration. He makes the obvious sound like a scandal. But I think he misses the point: politicians, in Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's watch, have "finally" realized that they can do away with every ounce of their shamelessness.

Even being stupendously stupid is not shameful anymore, neither is theft, neither is murder. And Filipinos? Eventually, they'll wish to go back to the good, old Spanish days when a ruler was a ruler and an indio was an indio. No more of this huffing and puffing in the media.

—BRIAN BROTARLO,
brian.brotarlo@lycos.com

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teenpreneur challenge at TOURISM NEGOSYO

Congratulations!

The Teenpreneur Challenge judges

Joel Santos of ESA shows the products of one of the participating schools to Joey Concepcion, DOT Usec. Oscar Palabyab, DTI Sec. Peter Favila and DTI Usec. Carissa Evangelista.

teenpreneur challenge RESULTS

Best Improved Product Category
1st Tabernacle of Faith Christian Academy Team A
2nd Xavier School
3rd San Beda

Best Selling GK Product
1st Xavier School
2nd Tabernacle of Faith Christian Academy Team B
3rd Tabernacle of Faith Christian Academy Team A

GK Special Awards
St. Paul QC Team B
Tabernacle of Faith Christian Academy Team B

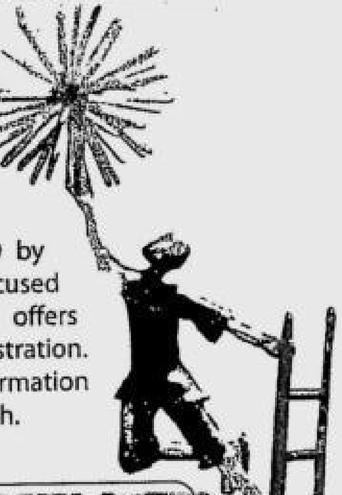
Splash Galing ng Pinoy Award
Elizabeth Seton School

Entrepreneurs School of Asia Brings GoNegosyo to the High Schools

THE ENTREPRENEURS School of Asia (ESA) in cooperation with the Go Negosyo Movement organized the country's first inter-high school competition called the Teenpreneur Challenge. Approximately 300 high schools students from 18 institutions in Metro Manila started off with a "crash course" on entrepreneurship taught by the lecturers from ESA and the University of Portsmouth(UK). 23 Teenpreneur teams worked together with their ESA student coordinators and volunteer entrepreneur-mentors from the Association of Filipino Franchisers, Inc. (AFFI) and the Go Negosyo network for the "Challenge" of improving the sustainability of the livelihood products of the Gawad Kalinga Bayan-Anihan Project. All the improved products were then sold by the teams in the SM Mall of Asia during the Tourism Negosyo Expo.

The Teenpreneur Challenge was developed by the Entrepreneurs School of Asia as part of its advocacy to bring entrepreneurship and social responsibility to the high schools. The participating institutions were Assumption College (San Lorenzo), Elizabeth Seton School, Immaculate Conception Academy, Immaculate Heart of Mary, International Christian Academy, Kostka School, Lourdes School of Quezon City, Makati Hope Christian, Miriam College, O.B. Montessori, Philippine Science High School, San Beda College, San Benildo Integrated School, St. Bridget School, St. Paul's College (Pasig), St. Paul's University (Quezon City), Tabernacle of Faith Christian Academy (TFCA), and Xavier School.

The Entrepreneurs School of Asia was established in 1999 by Vivienne Tan and Joel Santos and is Asia's first college focused entirely on entrepreneurship education and research. It offers bachelor degrees in Entrepreneurship and Business Administration. ESA has a campus in the Philippines and in China. For more information please call (02) 638-1188 or log on to www.entrepreneur.edu.ph.



Xavier School won the Best Selling GK Product. With them in photo are (L-R) Joey Concepcion (Go Negosyo), Carson Tan (Aqua Best), Johnlu Koa (French Baker), Vivienne Tan (ESA), and Tony Meloto (GK)

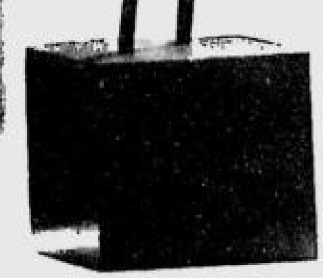
Tabernacle of Faith Christian Academy Team A won the Best Improved Gawad Kalinga Product. With them in the photo is their mentor Kamela Seen of Plato Wraps and Her Excellency Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo who handed them the award last 3 March at the Music Hall, SM Mall of Asia.

From L-R: Richie Cuna (Fiorgelato), Wool Reyes (Royal Caribbean Jamaican Patties), Monibel DyChiao (Steak MD), Champ Reyes (Royal Caribbean Jamaican Patties), Kamela Seen (Plato Wraps), Bards Montanido (Chichariffic), Vivienne Tan (ESA), Luis Oquiñena (GK), Joe Tale (GK), Tony Meloto (GK) and Pax Lapid (ESA)

Special thanks to the following:

VOLUNTEER MENTORS: Ian Aguilar (Tea Square) • Butz Bartolome (GMB) • Paolo Bediones (X1R) • Joel Cruz (Aqua Best) • Richie Cuna (Fiorgelato) • Monibel DyChiao (Steak MD) • Grace Glory Go (Philippine Star), Vernon Go (Pulp Magazine) • Chit Juan (Figaro) • Rommel Juan (Binalot) • Johnlu Koa (French Baker) • Pax Lapid (Entrepreneurs School of Asia) • Victor Laurel (Goto King) • Tanibel Lee (Annabel Cakes) Rowie Matti (Sacred Heart School) • Bards Montanido (Chicariffic) • Ping Par (PR Gaz Haus) • Ronald Pineda (Folded and Hung) • Tessa Prieto (Philippine Daily Inquirer) • Champ Reyes (Royal Caribbean Jamaican Patties) Wool Reyes (Royal Caribbean Jamaican Patties) • Richard Sanz (Tea Square) • Kamela Seen (Plato Wraps) • Cheche Soler (Goodah/Crystal Clear) • Carson Tan (Aqua Best) • Eric Teng (99 Store) • Paulo Tibig (Vintel Logistics) Brian Tiu (Teriyaki Boy) • Glen Yu (Seaoil) • FOOD AND EQUIPMENT: Aqua Best • French Baker • Neo Laptops

ESA ENTREPRENEURS SCHOOL of ASIA GAWAD KALINGA NEGOSYO Galing ng Pinoy! Mula sa SPLASH TAN YAN KEE


Trophy sculpture by Michael Carnio

Eco-friendly graduation rites urged

By Marlon Ramos
Inquirer Southern Luzon

CALAMBA CITY—A GROUP OF environmentalists on Saturday asked school officials all over the country to shun the usual festivities during graduation ceremonies and instead promote environment-friendly celebrations.

The EcoWaste Coalition (EC) said school authorities, student councils and parent-teacher associations should make the annual graduation rites "an occasion to show off values learned on how to conserve and protect our resources."

In a statement to the INQUIRER, the group expressed its support of the Department of Education order which instructed all public schools to hold austere graduation rites.

Education Secretary Jesli Lapus issued Memorandum Order No. 16-2007 which directs all DepEd officials to hold simple graduation rites in accordance with the government's austerity program.

"We are hopeful that our new batch of graduates, from both public and private schools, will mark this change-over in a ceremony devoid of extravagance and trash," said Neneng Jocson, EC project head

"The popular rite of passage should also promote ecological values," she added.

So celebrations would be "waste-free," the environmental group said school officials should stop using plastic banners, buntings and balloons to decorate venues. Food should be served on reusable containers and utensils, not on single-use styrofoam boxes and using disposable plastic utensils which "typically end up in rivers and dumps."

Trash should be segregated, one bin for biodegradable waste (recycling and composting) and another for nonbiodegradable waste.

"A graduation ceremony is an important rite of passage that students, parents and teachers look forward to. But it need not be a lavish and wasteful affair. It should be celebrated in a solemn, simple and ecological manner," Jocson said.

Tech-voc grads have better prospects—Tesda chief

By Jerome Aning

DON'T KNOCK HIGH SCHOOL seniors who were found to have a higher aptitude for technical-vocational (tech-voc) courses, a labor official said over the weekend.

Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (Tesda) chief Augusto Syjuco said having a college degree was not a guarantee for employment or success in life, adding that tech-voc graduates actually had more chances of finding work than those who graduated from tertiary school.

The Tesda director general was commenting on the National Career Assessment Examination recently administered to 1.3 million private and public high school students, the results of which showed that 54.5 percent of them had a "high" aptitude for tech-voc programs and another 35.9 percent had a "moderate" aptitude for the same subset. Fewer than 4 percent showed a "very high" aptitude for university scholastic studies.

Syjuco cited statistics showing that a college degree program, which requires greater investment in tuition and other related costs, produces only about 350,000 graduates every year, down from 700,000 a few years ago.

Of 350,000 college graduates, only 20 percent will able to find employment, mostly in jobs unrelated to what they studied in college.

"For example, a licensed engineer will find work as a salesman; a commerce graduate as a medical representative. Many degree holders land in call centers due to the lack of job opportunities," he said.

The National Manpower Summit hosted by the Department of Labor and Employment last year discovered that almost 200,000 "high-demand" jobs remained unfilled because applicants did not have the proper skills.

The job vacancies were in the fields of agri-business, cyber services, hotels and restaurants, creative services, tourism, health, mining and aviation.

"These statistics only prove that a college diploma is no longer the ticket to fame and fortune that it once was vaunted to be," Syjuco said.

In contrast, the less expensive tech-voc education and training system produces about 1.3 million graduates yearly and 60 percent of them readily find employment, Syjuco said.

"Employers prefer to hire, and are actually hiring, many more tech-voc graduates than college graduates," he said.

Primer to teach airport workers how to deal with visitors

AIRPORT OFFICIALS WILL launch today a service handbook for workers at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (Naia) to guide them in their dealings with the airport's users, particularly tourists.

"The airport is the gateway to the rest of the world and their contact with tourists happens within a few minutes. That's why every second counts, every small action ... Hopefully, that short interaction will be a pleasant experience," Manila International Airport Authority development chief Tirso Serrano said in an interview.

The Ninoy Aquino International Airport (Naia) Service Decorum Handbook, a primer on customer relations for all Naia personnel, will be issued starting today to airport personnel as part of the 25th anniversary celebration of the Miaa.

Heads of all agencies operating at the airport will sign a memorandum of undertaking which commits them to abide by the handbook's contents.

Serrano said the guidebook will be initially distributed to personnel trainers and, later, to some 3,000 personnel of the different agencies engaged in passenger relations at Miaa's facilities, including Naia Terminals 1 and 2 and the Manila Domestic Airport.

"The handbook is supposed to help and guide our people in terms of efficient service, and for them to realize that we have a common platform by which we should operate. It would be an opportune time for us, especially since in the past few months, there have been reports of misbehaving personnel," Serrano said.

Sessions will also be held for instruction and discussions about the contents of the primer, Serrano said. *Tarra Quismundo*

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From page A1

vices for a while.

Several research reports, both recently published and not yet published, provide evidence of the limits of multitasking.

The findings, according to neuroscientists, psychologists and management professors, suggest that many people would be wise to curb their multitasking behavior when working in an office, studying or driving a car.

These experts have some basic advice: Check e-mail messages once an hour, at most. Listening to soothing background music while studying may improve concentration.

But other distractions—most songs with lyrics, instant messaging, television shows—hamper performance.

Driving while talking on a cell phone, even with a hands-free headset, is a bad idea.

In short, the answer seems to lie in managing the technology, instead of merely yielding to its incessant tug.

"Multitasking is going to slow you down, increasing the chances of mistakes," said David E. Mayer, a cognitive scientist and director of the Brain, Cognition and Action Laboratory at the University of Michigan.

"Disruptions and interruptions are a bad deal from the standpoint of our ability to process information," Mayer added.

The human brain, with its hundred billion neurons and hundreds of trillions of synaptic connections, is a cognitive powerhouse in many ways.

"But a core limitation is an inability to concentrate on two things at once," said Rene Marois, a neuroscientist and director of the Human Information Processing Laboratory at Vanderbilt University.

Marois and three other Vanderbilt researchers reported in an article last December in the journal Neuron that they used magnetic resonance imaging to isolate the processing bottleneck in the brain and to measure the efficiency loss of trying to handle two tasks at once.

The researchers found that responses were delayed by up to a second when the study participants were given the two tasks at the same time.

In many daily tasks, of course, a lost second is unimportant.

But one implication of the Vanderbilt research, according to Marois, is that talking on a cell phone while driving a car is dangerous. A one-second delay in response time at about 100 kilometers per hour could be fatal, he noted. *New York Times News Service*

Fighting cancer, waging bigger battle

From page A1

perate," she said during an interview here on Saturday with her husband. Former Sen. John Edwards, who is squeamish about IVs, had left the room.

As she spoke with the nurses, Mrs. Edwards recalled: "They said they really supported John, and I started sort of breaking apart. I said, 'It's really important that he run.'"

Her decision to push her husband to run for president in spite of her life-threatening illness has provoked an intense discussion across America about illness, ambition, childrearing and death.

She said her husband's candidacy was not only about his needs and desires, but also about her own life and her wish to be something other than a woman best known for her life-threatening illness.

"I expect to live a long time," Mrs. Edwards said. "I expect us to have lots and lots of years together. I do believe that. But if that's not the case, I don't want my legacy to be that I pulled somebody who ought to be president out of the race. It's not fair to me, in a sense."

'It's my cause'

Saying she hoped to be "heavily involved" in her husband's campaign, she said: "My feeling is, if we gave up what we have committed to as our life's work, wouldn't I be getting ready to die? That's what I'd be doing. This cause is not just John's cause, it's my cause."

Her feelings that her husband should press on with his bid were oddly illuminated, she said, as she sat getting her IV, thinking that the test results would reveal cancer throughout her body—something that turned out not to be the case.

"I was thinking at the time if I light up like a Christmas tree perhaps John would feel like he could not be a candidate," he said.

Mr. Edwards, in announcing his wife's condition, said Thursday that his campaign to capture the Democratic presidential nomination "goes on strongly."

On Saturday, the couple were in Las Vegas at a health care forum after a round of fundraising events in California.

"We made the choice to live," Mrs. Edwards said. "We don't want to do it surrounded by a veil of tears."

Definitely in the race

"I'm definitely in the race for the duration," Mr. Edwards said at the Democratic presidential forum. "This is not the first challenge that Elizabeth and I have been through."

He pointed out that he and his wife lost their teenage son, Wade, 11 years ago in a car accident—something that he did not talk about much when he ran for president four years ago.

"I know because of the nature of the woman I'm married to that she will be there every single step of the way," he said. "We take our responsibility to serving this country very seriously."

He said he and his wife had been getting too much credit for forging ahead when millions of women were enduring the same struggle and the additional worry of getting the necessary care.

"One of the reasons that I want to be president of the United States is to make sure that every woman and every person in America gets the same things that we have," Edwards said. *Reports from New York Times News Service and AP*

Fashion
Fruit Punch

This summer season have fun in the sun and take your pick from a fashion fruit salad with a delectable array of vivid hues.

Strawberry Shake
Red- the emotionally intense color. A retro recipe for summer glamour.

Peep-toe Unlisted sandal
MACO puffed sleeves blouse
Flounce skirt in stripes
Speedo string top in stripes with boy shorts

Lemon Heaven
Yellow the color of sunshine, cheerfulness, joy and energy-everybody's favorite!

Tank top
Abaca shoulder bag with floral straw accent
V- neck top longer body perfect for layering
Mother goose smocking dress

Blueberry Classic
Breezier than black and the coolest hue in the spectrum. Can't help but imagine the sky and the sea and the mouthwatering blueberry cheesecake you love.

Nautilus string top with shorts in floral prints
Sexy flounce halter dress
Cotton skirt
Native handbag with synthetic handle
Sketchers wooden sandals

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Towering inferno a challenge to firemen

From page A1

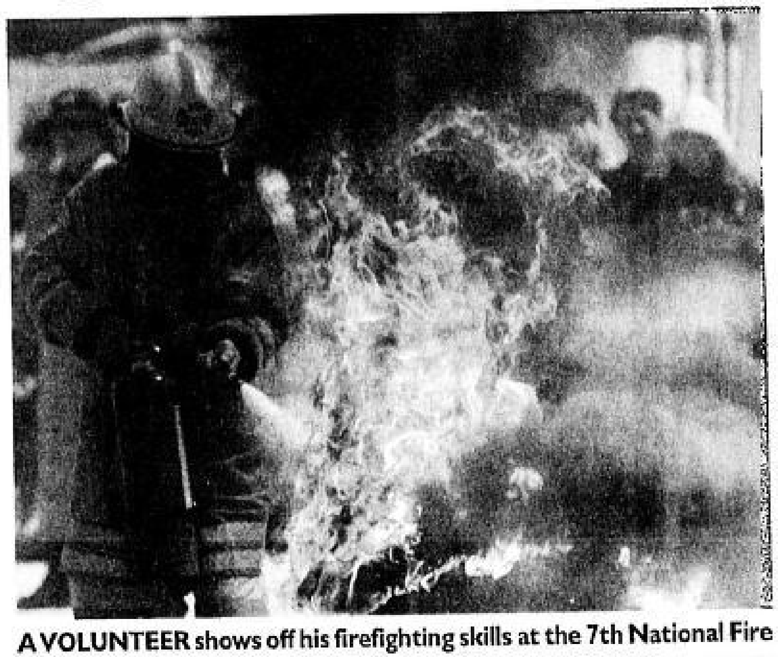
fleeing. The open windows on the 19th floor were already belching thick white smoke. But Bucayo regarded it rather as a good omen.

"I already had an idea that an ordinary combustible material was burning and that the fire fighting won't last that long," he told the INQUIRER.

A repeat of the Manor Hotel tragedy appeared to have dissipated.

Forty minutes later, the fire that began in two storage rooms was put out. No one was hurt and damage was placed at P1 million.

There were a few glitches during the operation, said Langcay, one of about 25 firefighters dispatched to the scene.



A VOLUNTEER shows off his firefighting skills at the 7th National Fire Volunteer Olympics.

RYAN LIM

Fighting fire Pinoy style

Without an aerial ladder truck that could hoist firemen to the 19th floor and the hotel elevator out of commission, the firefighters, in their heavy bunker coats, scaled the building on foot.

And because the building's standpipe system designed to conduct water for the fire hose attachments also failed to function, they had to carry five bulky 50-foot fire hoses with them up the staircase, Langcay related.

Good thing he took seriously the daily 45-per-minute push-ups and 16-kilometer run back in his training years or he would have ended up too exhausted to function well up there, he said with a chuckle.

The smoke was still tolerable when the firemen reached the "seat of fire." Without gas masks, they launched the assault "Pinoy style"—with wet towels on their nose.

Luck was also on their side. But what if it runs out in the next fire?

'Ticking time bomb'

A Bureau of Fire Protection official, who requested anonymity, disclosed that with the lackadaisical implementation of the Fire Code and the scant equipment and training, tenants of high rises were sitting on "a ticking time bomb."

"It is practically a suicide attempt for firefighters to respond to fires in skyscrapers at this point as a very high percentage of high-rise buildings are not complying with the law," he said.

Of the more than 1,000 high-rises in Metro Manila, only 20 percent have complied with the 1978 Fire Code, said the official.

Under the law, a structure that stands 50 meters, or five stories, and above must be equipped with a reliable fire protection system, including sprinklers, fire alarm, smoke detectors, standpipe, smoke purge control, evacuation, intercommunication, ventilation and fire brigade.

Senior Supt. Carlito Romero, BFP director for operations, conceded that the bureau's capability to respond to fires in high-rises was limited to "theoretical knowledge."

"The community has progressed in terms of economy and infrastructure, but the fire department has failed to develop with the community," he said.

Antiquated trucks

The bureau has limited fire trucks, aerial ladder trucks, rescue vans, ambulances and breathing apparatuses.

In Metro Manila, there are five aerial ladder trucks (with a working height of only up to 12 floors), 105 fire trucks, 11 rescue vehicles, 35 breathing apparatuses and a weapon of mass destruction response trailer. All of these, except for the last one, were purchased in 1982.

The BFP has 1,269 fire trucks and 74 ambulances—of which 134 and 16, respectively, have become obsolete and unserviceable.

In Makati City, where 484 buildings are classified as high-rise, there are eight functional fire trucks while six are beyond repair, said District Fire Marshal Sofia Mendoza.

"As for the breathing apparatus that we have, its working time is 30 minutes. Meaning, a firefighter has 15 minutes to go inside a burning building and another 15 minutes to go out," she said.

Inadequate training facility

Both officials agreed that the bureau had yet to implement extensive training for fire response in tall buildings.

At the Fire National Training Institute in Camp Vicente Lim, Laguna, only a four-story tower serves as training facility. The ideal, Romero said, was a 70-story structure.

The lack of facilities and equipment can be attributed to insufficient budget, a perennial problem, noted Romero.

For 2007, the BFP has been granted P4.75 billion with a capital outlay of P50 million—already 30 percent higher than the previous year's budget.

"The bureau has not yet decided whether it will be dedicated for fire trucks or personal protection equipments," Romero said.

But even if the bureau has a hefty budget for state-of-the-art equipment (an aerial ladder truck costs P25 million while an ordinary 1,000-gallon fire truck costs P8 million), there would still be many extrinsic factors to deal with.

The majority of the roads and bridges in Metro Manila have a 20-ton capacity. Modern fire trucks weigh more than that, he noted.

The usually cramped and cable-girdled streets provide obstacles for these vehicles. "In other countries, fire trucks could speed off easily to the scene because electric wires are installed underground," said Mendoza.

Fire code standards

Eighty percent of high-rise buildings in Metro Manila, which should function as fire trucks in case of emergency, are far from meeting the requirements of the Fire Code. Very few buildings have a fire protection system, which is 30 percent of total construction cost, said Romero.

He said the installation of smoke, fire alarm, smoke detection and intercommunication systems should follow the Philippine Electrical Code. Cables and wires must withstand heat for at least half an hour, fire escape doors should be able to resist smoke for 30 minutes and building occupants must be trained in fire suppression.

Elevators or fireman's lifts in the majority of the buildings are unreliable.

"No firefighter has ever dared jump into an elevator while a building is on fire. Its function has been limited to carrying heavy tools and equipment needed in the operation," said Romero.

With too many limitations, the bureau has been compelled to dwell more on the "passive way" of fighting fire: prevention. Ironically, there are more fires during the fire prevention month of March.

Firemen pray hard that no skyscraper would catch fire, not now when they are in dire straits.

"If all else fails, we do not know what will happen ... we will continue risking our lives," said Romero.

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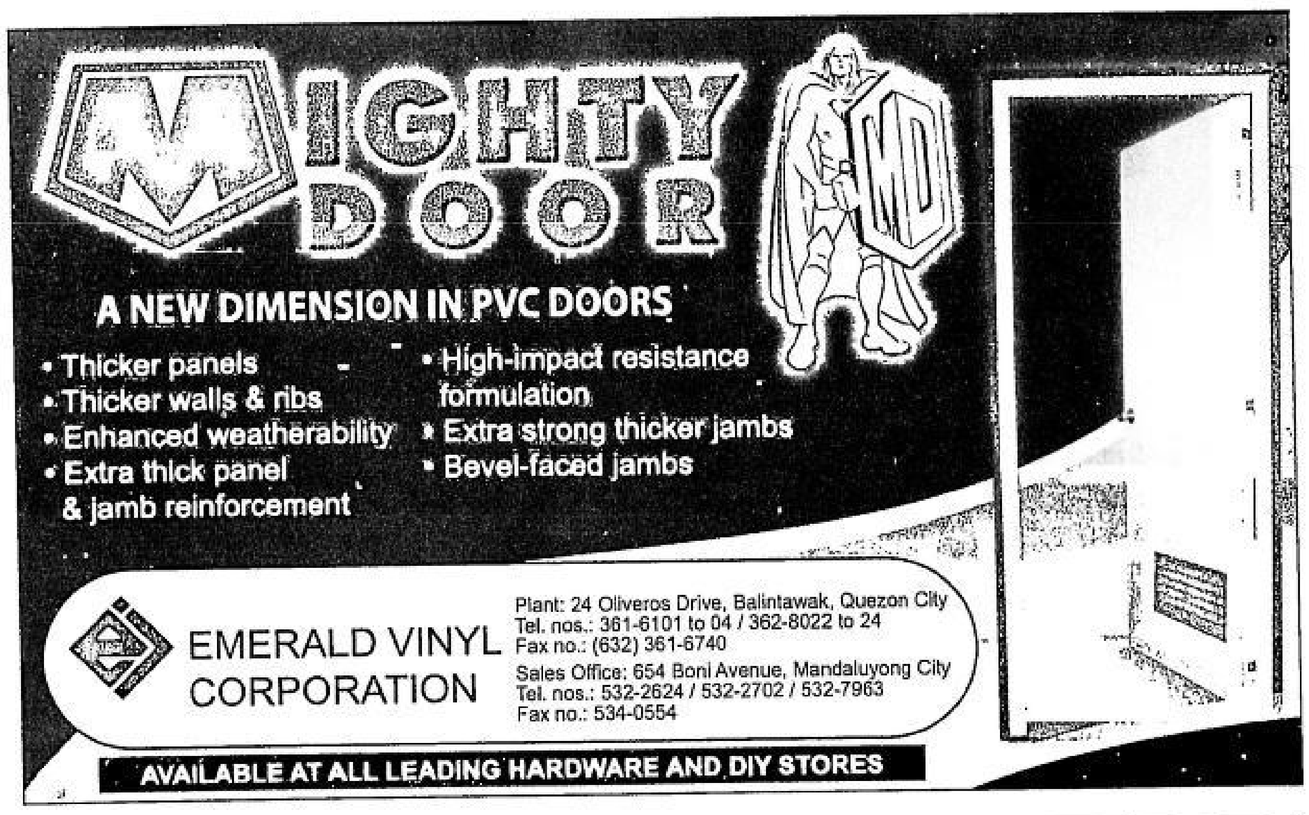
WHAT'S left of Eastern Enterprises in Cebu City's Cogon Pardo.

LITO TECSON/CEBU DAILY NEWS



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7 killed as fire razes noodle factory in Cebu

From page A1

grandchildren.

Fire Marshal Supt. Esmael Codilla said the possibility of a labor dispute, family conflict and insurance coverage would be considered in the investigation of the fire that hit the Eastern Enterprises in Cogon Pardo, Cebu City.

Codilla said, however, he was not discounting the possibility that faulty wiring caused the blaze.

The fatalities were identified as Chang Eng-eng Chua, 70; her daughter Ellen Chua Tiu, 44; Kenneth Quie, 9, and sister Karen, 15; Chua siblings Arvin, 13, Aljohn, 12, and Ada, 16.

The three Chua siblings were children of Alan and Danette Chua, who were not at the warehouse-type building in Cogon Pardo when the fire broke out.

Codilla said Alan was in Zamboanga City attending to a business there, while Danette was in another residence in Lapu-Lapu City.

Alan, the son of Chang Eng-eng, manages the company, Codilla said.

The fire investigators suspecting arson said they heard Danette saying she hoped the one who set off the fire would be bothered by his conscience. Codilla said probers could not ask Danette for an explanation of her statement because she was still in grief.

Victims asleep

He said it seemed that most of the victims were asleep at the building's three-room mezzanine floor when the fire occurred at 1:12 a.m.

There were some stay-in workers sleeping at the building's ground floor, Codilla said.

He said a certain Emerito told fire investigators that he heard Ellen shouting for help.

Codilla said Emerito claimed that it was too late for him to rescue Ellen because the fire was already big.

Emerito was sleeping at the far end of the building. The other employees were sleeping in a separate quarters near the garage.

Ellen's body was recovered inside a toilet while Chang with her grandchildren—the Quie siblings and Ada—were in another toilet. Arvin and Aljohn were still on their bed, which fell down to the ground floor.

Codilla said the children could have died due to suffocation.

Damage was placed at P900,000.

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Int'l forum: RP gov't . . .

rom page A1

"The tribunal, having considered the evience before it, is of the opinion that the reorted killings, torture and forced disappearnces fall under the responsibility of the hilippine government and are by no means ustified in terms of necessary measures gainst terrorism," it added.

A copy of the decision was e-mailed to the INUIRER last night by the Philippine chapter of the ribunal secretariat through the human rights lliance Karapatan. Its secretary general, Marie ilao-Enriquez, testified on the human rights ituation in the country.

A seven-member jury of the tribunal heard harges against both the Philippine and US overnments which, the verdict said, "colludd with each other in implementing the US' o-called 'war on terror' in Southeast Asia."

Leaders of the House majority said the Hague orum showed its "biased nature" by asking Sen. amby Madrigal to testify before the group.

House Majority Leader Prospero Nograles and ep. Exequiel Javier said in a statement that Madrial's testimony "was part of the intensified opposition black propaganda against the President."

The tribunal, an independent body founded in 1979 in Italy by lawyers, writers and intellectuals, examines and judges complaints regarding violations of human rights submitted by the victims themselves or groups representing them.

The hearings were held in a church in The Hague.

The Philippine government has blamed the communist New People's Army for most of the murders, saying the group was purging its own ranks.

The international community has voiced concern over the unresolved killings of hundreds of political activists in the country since Ms Arroyo took office in 2001.

The charges presented against both the Arroyo and Bush administrations included:

- Gross and systematic violations of civil and political rights: extrajudicial killings, abduction and disappearances, massacre, torture.
- Gross and systematic violation of economic, social and cultural rights.
- Gross and systematic violations of the rights to national self-determination and liberation.

GO bets must take stand on human rights, economy

From page A1

been canceled due to thin crowd turnout).

Its campaign funds are low, a sign that it is not getting significant financial support from the business community, which appears to signal that it is worried about whether there would be a predictable economic policy environment in the event of opposition control of the Senate.

HR violations, economy

With most opinion surveys indicating that an opposition win of at least eight of the 12 Senate seats at stake is possible, it is more important that Osmeña inform the voters where the GO stands on the human rights violations and on the economy.

The opposition is conducting its campaign in a policy vacuum, and Osmeña is trivializing the opposition campaign on nonpolicy issues.

Control of the Senate is not a matter of holding the majority of seats. So far the opposition campaign has been shaping as an individual popularity contest.

No opposition senatorial candidate has identified himself or herself by taking a stand on the threat of a highjack of the national security policy by the security forces, and on the redirection of the economy to accelerate the annual growth rate beyond 5 percent and spread its gains more widely to the poor.

Military out of control

If the opposition senatorial candidates win in the elections, what would the voters expect from an opposition majority in policy terms?

In what way can an opposition majority be held accountable for protecting democracy in the country from its continuing erosion by security forces in their unbridled "all out war" to crush the communist insurgency by 2010.

In implementing the President's policy, the security forces have carried out the counterinsurgency with excessive force. In this campaign, they have gone out of control. What happened to civilian authority reigning supreme over the military?

This is the policy issue confronting the opposition on which it has to define itself as a political collectivity, not just a herd of individuals and separate opinions, if it is to be a real "genuine" opposition, let alone a united one on at least a couple of key issues.

Forcing policy changes

The opposition camp seems not to have sufficiently recognized as crucial the challenge of the May elections for it to stand up as a veto power (if it gains majority seats) to overturn the onerous and dangerous security policy and economic priorities of the administration. The opposition has been fractured since the 2004 elections.

Midterm elections are not only a referendum on and a vote of confidence in the administration. They can be an occasion for forcing policy changes. In the security area, the challenge confronting the opposition has come from the military.

Lobby of extreme Right

When the Democrats regained control of both houses of the US Congress last November, they used their mandate to try to reverse President George W. Bush's policy of deeper US military involvement in the Iraq war.

Speaking on behalf of the security forces, Gen. Hermogenes Esperon Jr., Armed Forces of the Philippines chief of staff, recently called for the outlawing the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) by repealing the Anti-Subversion Law (Republic Act No. 1700) that declared illegal the CPP and its front organizations.

The law was repealed in 1992, legalizing the CPP, in line with the policy of the post-Marcos administration of then President Fidel Ramos of channeling the communist movement into the parliamentary stream.

This call reflects the lobby of the extreme-right wing of the security forces, which, through its mailed-fist implementation of presidential security policy, seeks to reimpose the hardline approach of the Marcos dictatorship. This policy had failed to crush the communist movement.

Squandered opportunity

The opposition has squandered the opportunity to take on the administration on the economic issue by avoiding a debate on the economy.

It has a reservoir of public dissatisfaction over the failure of the economic gains to trickle down to the poor, and fear over the repressive military counterinsurgency campaign.

Maybe the opposition is afraid it might be tagged a communist sympathizer if it states a policy position on the human rights abuses.

It has more to fear if the Senate cannot stop the right-wing military lobby from taking control of security policy from democratic control.

This is the underlying issue at stake in the May election.

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Ocampo sees Mandela as model of endurance

From page A1

from 1989 to 1992, he wrote the South African leader and told him about his situation in the Philippines.

Mandela's reply came in the form of a solidarity message to "my Filipino friends fighting for human rights."

The written message, given during Mandela's visit to the Philippines 15 years ago, is framed in Ocampo's house.

The "Mandela model" of endurance pretty much sums up Ocampo's attitude in the face of the multiple murder charge filed against him in connection with the killing of alleged communist spies in Leyte more than 20 years ago. *(See related story on Page A23.)*

Much of Ocampo's resistance goes in plain view of the media. It comes in subtle forms every day at the MPD headquarters, where police, little by little, are supposed to restrict his activities.

Since he was moved to the Rizal Conference Room on the second floor, Ocampo said he had been allowed only three visitors at a time. Visiting hours were only from 10 a.m. to noon and 5 p.m. to 7 p.m.

One officer assigned at the main gate said police didn't want Ocampo's supporters to mass up for a "lightning rally," which explained the limited number of visitors. Another officer said they were wary that someone might assassinate the lawmaker.

L-shaped room

"That's absurd," Ocampo said in Filipino. "Danger will come only from the policemen assigned to watch over me."

On many occasions, he had opposed the limited visitation rights. In most cases, he said he prevailed.

"Police sometimes tell visitors that I'm tired and want to rest already. But they don't decide for me."

As per the directive of the MPD leadership, Ocampo was supposed to stay only at the Rizal Conference Room, an elongated version of a regular-size classroom used for command conferences. It is ostensibly not meant for detention, which explains the absence of a decent toilet.

To accommodate Ocampo, the desks were arranged in an "L shape" from the entrance, giving him a small space for reading and paper work. The high window that was supposed to allow sunlight in has been shut.

Link to outside world

Aside from the "detention room" and the tight security, the MPD has provided nothing more, Ocampo said.

He brought his own mattress so he won't have to sleep on the cold floor. His party-list group brought in a cassette radio so he won't be exactly isolated from the outside world.

There's also a water dispenser that also benefits his police watchers. A Bayan Muna staff member runs errands for him, buying his meals at the "*carinderias*" fronting the police headquarters.

He takes a shower shortly before 10 p.m. since the water supply inexplicably disappears at the MPD from that time until 8 the following morning, he said.

REM ZAMORA

OCAMPO and his wife Carolina Malay share a bowl of noodles at the police headquarters.

He's allowed to use a cell phone but, as in his conversations with visitors, he's had to keep his volume down.

"This life is no big deal to me," he said. "My means are simple, that's why my needs are also simple."

Solitary confinement

If it's any consolation, the conference room is air-conditioned, a far cry from the isolation rooms he once was kept in: He spent nine months in solitary confinement during his nine-year imprisonment under martial law.

Ocampo was also jailed during the Aquino presidency. Never convicted of any crime, he spent a total of 12 years and four months in prison just the same.

"*Wala ito* (This is nothing)," he said of his current detention.

Ocampo's ordeal at the hands of his military captors under Ferdinand Marcos—the electric current made to pass through his genitals, the burning of his toenails, the "karate chops"—was too much.

But the experience pales in comparison to Mandela's 27-year detention, the lawmaker noted.

With clean hands

Like the former South African president, Ocampo abhorred the "military-police mindset" of the government in dealing with people under detention.

"They have this mind-set that once they get you, they already have custody of your person, that they can restrict your freedom."

Yesterday morning, Ocampo showed yet more subtle defiance. He demanded that he be allowed outside the Rizal Conference Room for his morning exercise, topped by sets of push-ups and sit-ups. His wish was granted.

"I want to go through this (ordeal) with my hands clean," he said. "That's why I'm fighting this on the legal front. My enemies are taunting me to go back to the mountains and I won't. I'm engaging them, but I hope they will play fair."

CLIMATE CHANGE

Water shortage feared in the Visayas

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
Inquirer Visayas

ILOILO CITY—WATER SUPPLIERS IN THE VISAYAS ARE FACING supply problems because of the drying up of water sources due to climatic changes.

Melchor Bibanco, president of the Visayas Association of Water Districts, said most water districts were experiencing supply problems, especially during the summer season.

"Our spring water sources usually dry up at this time. It's getting worse each year," said Bibanco in an interview.

Bibanco attributed the depletion of water sources to the El Niño weather phenomenon as part of the global climatic changes.

When El Niño last occurred in 1982-83, abnormal weather patterns such as drought were observed in the Philippines and other parts of the world, heavy rains in some countries in South America, and hurricanes in some parts of Hawaii.

Remus Braganza, president of the Water District General Managers Association in Panay, said there was a growing problem with finding enough sources of potable water because of the lesser amount of rainfall.

He said the unregulated diggings of wells also depleted the groundwater.

Bibanco said the water problem would be aggravated by the lack of capacity of water districts to implement expansion projects to find other sources of water and projects to make their systems more efficient.

"While water districts are among the government-owned and-controlled corporations, we do not get funding from the government," said Bibanco.

He said lack of funds hindered the groups' capacity to address the growing water needs brought by increasing population.

In Iloilo, the Metro Iloilo Water District (MIWD) has started rationing water supply to consumers because of the expected increase in demand and the low water level of its source.

The MIWD extracts water from the Tigum River through an intake dam in Barangay Daja in Maasin town, 29.5 kilometers northwest of Iloilo City. It also gets its supply from seven pumping stations in deep wells in Oton and San Miguel.

It provides about 1.2 million cubic meters of water monthly to about 26,000 customers in Oton, Pavia, Santa Barbara, Cabatuan, Maasin, San Miguel and Iloilo City.

MIWD interim general manager Edwin Reyes said the rationing would last the whole summer. He said there has been a decrease in water flow from the Maasin watershed.

MIWD director Tom Villaroman said a massive reforestation program at the watershed area must be implemented to stop the depletion of water sources.

He said areas served by the MIWD would face shortage by 2010 if the depletion of the water sources in Maasin would continue and if no alternative sources of water would be found.

The MIWD is implementing a P207-million project to rehabilitate its piping system.

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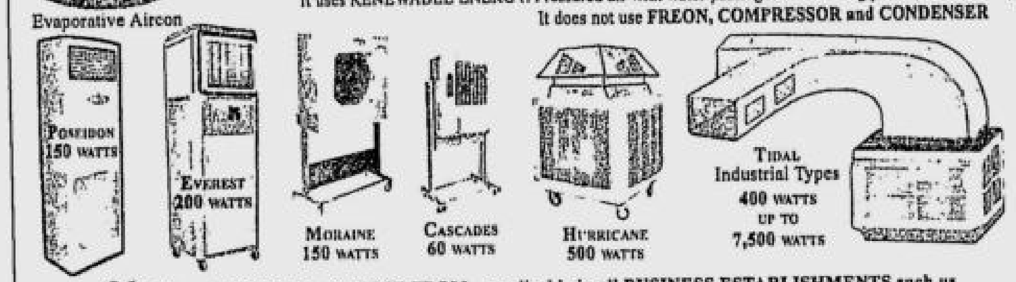

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Groups hit junking of complaint vs Petron

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
Inquirer Visayas

ARNOLD ALMACEN/INQUIRER VISAYAS

THESE mangroves turned gray and black after the oil spill reached Guimaras.

ILOILO CITY—THE JUNKING BY THE Guimaras Provincial Prosecutors Office of a complaint against Petron Corp. officials and the owner of the sunken tanker Solar I, in relation to the oil spill last year, drew criticisms from two environmental groups even as the Guimaras provincial government vowed to pursue the case.

Two environmental groups maintained that Petron should be made to answer for the oil spill that had destroyed the livelihood of thousands of residents and devastated the island's rich marine resources.

Greenpeace said the junking of the criminal complaint against Petron was "most unfortunate."

"The ruling glosses over the company's responsibilities for what stands as one of the worst environmental disasters in Philippine history," said Von Hernandez, campaign director of Greenpeace in Southeast Asia.

Hernandez said that while the oil firm did not intend to cause the spill, "Petron's negligence in exercising duty of care over the cargo it intended to profit from, is criminal. The company has to be made liable for this criminal negligence."

The Save Our Lives, SOS!, composed of nongovernment organizations, scientists and environmentalists, said the cleanup and rehabilitation of the affected areas and residents were only a part of addressing the oil spill.

"We must make sure that justice will be given to all the victims by punishing those responsible for this man-made catastrophe," Save our Lives SOS! coordinator Ma. Geobelyn Lopez said.

Guimaras provincial legal officer Plaridel Nava II said he would file a motion for reconsideration today.

While the groups agreed with the resolution that the sinking of the tanker and oil spill were unintentional, Nava said they would point out that Petron and the owner of the tanker were still criminally liable for reckless imprudence.

He pointed out that the Solar I was not seaworthy when it sailed on Aug. 11, 2006 and eventually sank 13.3 miles southwest of Guimaras Island.

Nueva Valencia Mayor Diosdado Gonzaga, in a telephone interview, said he would pursue the complaint because of the damage resulting from the oil spill.

Guimaras Gov. JC Rahman Nava said he was saddened with the dismissal of the complaint.

"We will exhaust whatever legal measures available to us," Nava said in a telephone interview.

The governor denied that the complaint that the province filed was inherently weak.

Provincial Prosecutor Luzermindo Calmorin issued a 17-page resolution on March 2 dismissing the criminal complaint filed against Petron officials and the owner of the tanker for lack of probable cause.

Gonzaga had accused Petron officials and Sunshine Maritime Development Corp. of violating Republic Act No. 9275 (Clean Water Act of 2004), RA 8749 (Clean Air Act of 1999) and RA 9003 (Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000).

Calmorin said in his resolution that the respondents could not be held criminally liable because the sinking of the tanker and the oil spill were unintentional.

He dismissed the complainant's allegation that the personnel hired by the oil firm dumped contaminated debris in a village in Nueva Valencia and sprayed chemicals in the shoreline without authorization.

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Alleged suicide bombers roaming Mindanao with legitimate car plates

COTABATO CITY—THE PLATE NUMBERS OF cars being used by supposed suicide bombers roaming several Mindanao provinces are legitimate, said an official of the Land Transportation Office (LTO) in Central Mindanao.

Earlier, police authorities in Central Mindanao and in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao said they were on high alert following intelligence reports about a supposed group of bombers from the Jemaah Islamiyah and the Abu Sayyaf, who were planning to stage suicide attacks.

ARMM police chief Chief Supt. Joel Goltiao told reporters on Thursday that the information was relayed to them by the Central Mindanao police.

"These are still raw information that needs to be confirmed. But true or not, we are on alert," Goltiao said.

He said that based on the report, terrorists identified with the Abu Sayyaf and the JI would use seven cars for the mission, which would be carried out in North Cotabato, South Cotabato and this city.

Goltiao said the plate numbers of the cars to be used for the supposed bomb attacks had already been identified.

"I'd rather not divulge the plate numbers yet," Goltiao said, adding that these cars were still being tracked down.

Central Mindanao police director Chief Supt. Felizardo Serapio said he had asked the military's help on the reported terror plot in the region.

"The information could be the handiwork of pranksters, but it's better to be always prepared than to take the threat lightly," Serapio said.

Mike Almansa, LTO operations chief for Central Mindanao, said the plate numbers identified by the police really existed.

He said LTO computer records indicated that the plate numbers used by the alleged bombers belonged to cargo trucks. The others were traced to motorcycles.

Almansa said the LTO believed that the plate numbers were stolen and urged authorities to double-check vehicles.

"Police or military personnel manning checkpoints should ensure that the plate number matches with the LTO-registered vehicle," he said. *Charlie C. Señase, Inquirer Mindanao*

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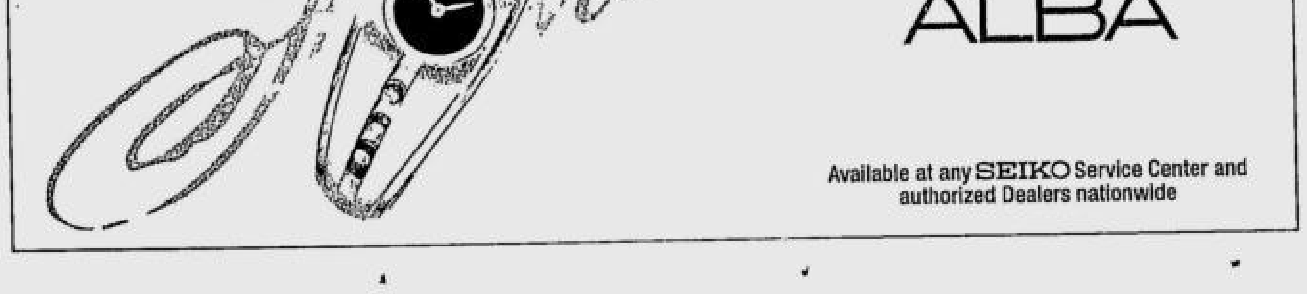
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3 Cebu villages gear for heritage tourism

By Irene R. Sino Cruz
Inquirer Visayas

CEBU CITY—RECOGNIZING THE immediate benefits derived from the tourism industry, three villages agreed to join the community-based cultural heritage tourism project that would enable their residents to offer products and services.

The project, implemented under the Promoting Regional Opportunities for Enterprise and Livelihood Development (Propel) program of the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCCI), aims to assist the target communities to become competitive by providing them entrepreneurial skills and other capabilities, as well as helping the local government and other institutions manage the project.

The Cebu Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCCI) will implement the project in Barangays Sto. Niño, Parian and Ermita, as well as people's organizations in these areas.

During the project launching on March 20, PCCI area vice president Jose Ng said the program aimed to develop grassroots entrepreneurship through heritage tourism that would contribute to ease poverty and enhance economic growth in Cebu communities.

The project uses the pro-poor tourism approach and seeks to improve the livelihood of the poor through micro enterprise development, economic gain through employment and empowerment through participation in decision making, Ng said.

"This way, the project shall ensure that the locality's poor people are able to secure economic benefits from tourism in a fair and sustainable manner," he said.

The CCCI said a truly effective sustainable form of development could be achieved only when people on the local level were involved and empowered to implement their own development program, he pointed out.

The three villages saw the need to make full use of their resources and develop grassroots entrepreneurship.

Sto. Niño, for example, is the site of Magellan's Cross and the 16th-century Basilica Minore del Sto. Niño Church, but very few people have gone into tourist-oriented businesses.

A brief on the project prepared by the CCCI showed that many vendors selling souvenir items in the barangays came from areas in the city or outside it.

The project is meant to encourage residents to come up with their own businesses targeting tourists, by selling delicacies and souvenir items or offering guide services.

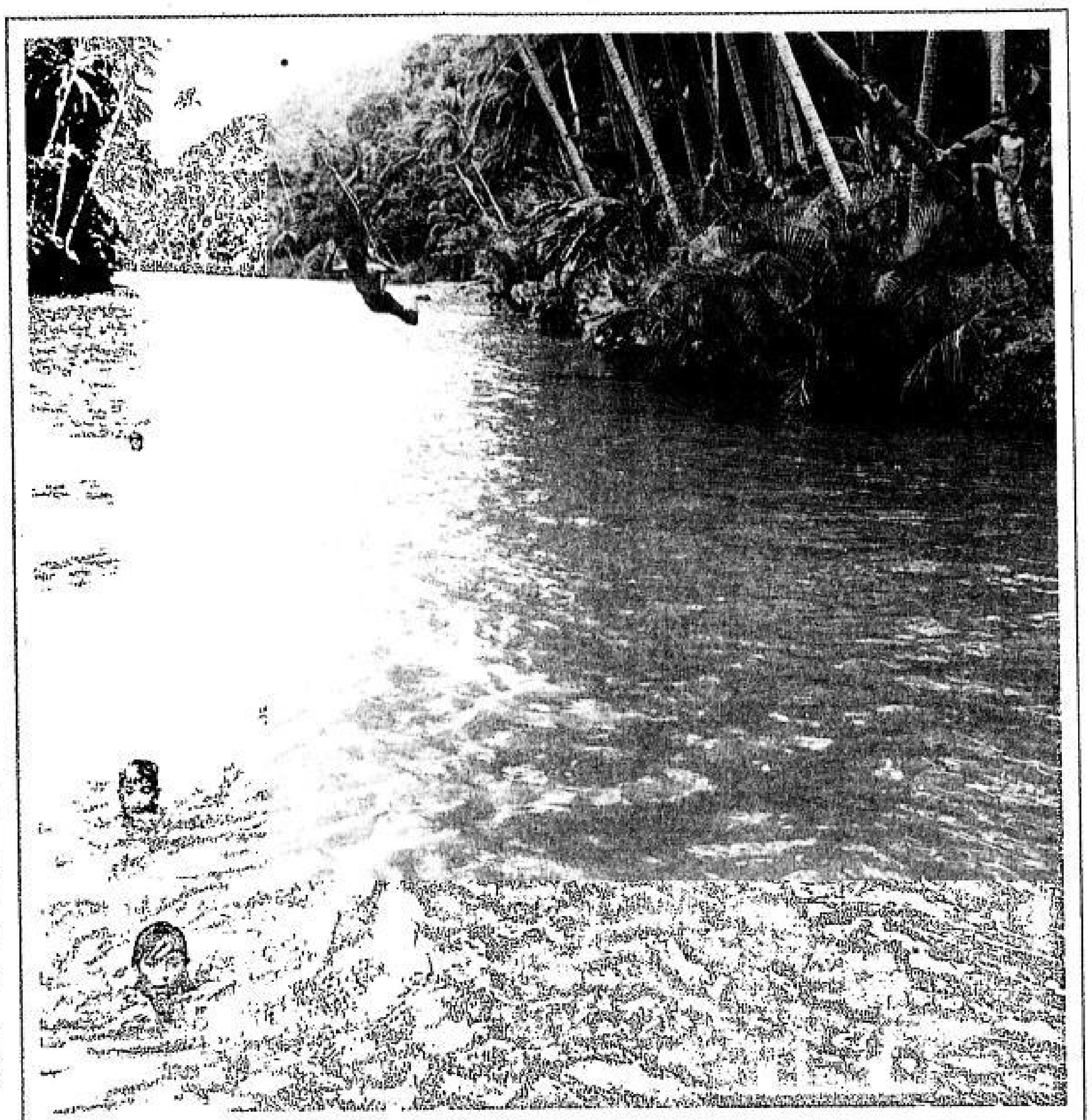
On the other hand, Parian has the P33.2-million Cebu Cultural Heritage Monument by national artist Eduardo Castrillo, but the barangay is constrained by the lack of properly trained guide. Only a barangay councilor and the barangay secretary serve as tour guides.

Just like Sto. Niño, could also develop its own grassroots entrepreneurs.

Ermita has to develop its own heritage site. The proposal is to transform the Warwick Barracks, a series of old buildings near Carbon Market, into a dry goods market.

At present, tourists frequent the Carbon Market to buy native baskets, trays and other souvenir items.

Ermita barangay chair Felicisimo Rupinta welcomed the idea of training the *tanods* (village peace officers) to be the tour guides.



SIMPLE JOYS IN BOHOL ARNOLD ALMACEN/INQUIRER VISAYAS
School has ended and these children while away their time and have fun swimming and diving at the Loboc River in Bohol.

DPWH rushes Quezon-Bicol highway rehab for Holy Week

By Delfin T. Mallari Jr.
and Ephraim Aguilar
Inquirer Southern Luzon

THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC Works and Highways is rushing the repair and rehabilitation of the Quirino Highway, the major road going to Bicol, in anticipation of the big volume of motorists during the Holy Week, but frequent rains are hampering the timetable of the road workers.

"We've been doing road improvement to accommodate the increasing volume of daily traffic in the area. But once the rain pours, the work momentum is affected so we have to work double time," Ronel Tan, district engineer of the DPWH-Quezon 4th Engineering District, told the INQUIRER.

A DPWH report said Quirino Highway has been divided into two sections—the 29-kilometer stretch in the Quezon side and the 64-km portion in Camarines Sur, known as Andaya Highway.

The road was opened in 1998 to reduce travel time from Manila to Bicol and vice versa.

Tan's engineering district handles the Quezon portion of the highway, while the portion from Del Gallego, Camarines Sur, up to the Maharlika Highway junction is being handled by the DPWH-Bicol.

More than 15 km have already been rehabilitated.

Drivers and operators of 10-wheel trucks have complained of spending more money for gasoline as they have been rerouted to Daet, Camarines Norte, causing a two-hour delay in travel time.

The truckers will have to wait until the last quarter for the repair of the Andaya Highway to be completed.

The repair of the highway started after President Macapagal-Arroyo visited Bicol in February 2006 when she saw its bad condition. She ordered the initial release of P250 million for repair.

DPWH Bicol director Orlando Roces said P30 million, which was released in the third quarter of last year, had already been spent for the project.

Another P130 million was released in December 2006 for another phase of the project, which is expected to be completed at the last quarter.

The 2007 General Appropriations Act allotted an additional P300 million to complete the repair of Andaya.

Roces said the main reasons for damages of the Andaya Highway were the passage of overloaded trucks and the unstable foundation of the pavement due to the clayish nature of the soil in the area.

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Gov't erred in pressing raps against Satur–Joker

SORSOGON CITY—REELECTIONist Senator Joker Arroyo is willing to testify on the case filed against Bayan Muna Rep. Satur Ocampo, saying the government erred in pressing charges against the militant lawmaker.

Arroyo said the case against Ocampo had already been "extinguished" when then President Corazon Aquino issued amnesty proclamations in 1987 which covered political crimes.

The Bicolano senator said that aside from Aquino, then president Fidel Ramos issued proclamations which also pardoned political offenders.

Arroyo, who was here for the Team Unity campaign sortie, cited Amnesty Proclamations Nos. 2 and 80 as among those issued by Aquino which extinguished the alleged offenses committed by Ocampo.

He, however, said he would only testify on the case if summoned by the court but would not volunteer as there were ethical issues that must be considered.

Reached by phone in Manila, the detained Ocampo said Arroyo might appear in court as "amicus curiae," or "friend of the court," to enlighten it about the proclamations issued by Aquino during which time he was the executive secretary.

Ocampo added that aside from Arroyo, former Sen. Rene Saguisag, Aquino's former spokesperson, made a public statement confirming the amnesty proclamations which covered political offenses during the Marcos years.

Ocampo said he would remain in the Western Police District until the Supreme Court decide on his petition.

On March 19, police forcibly hauled Ocampo off to Leyte in a private plane to face murder charges. *Bobby Labalan, Inquirer Southern Luzon*

Bayan Muna hit poster removal

ILOILO CITY—MILITANT PARTY-list groups have filed a complaint before the Commission on Elections for the destruction of their campaign materials posted in designated areas in the city.

In a letter submitted to lawyer Elizabeth Doronilla, election officer of the province and city, Bayan Muna said its posters had been "sabotaged" in plazas in the districts of Jaro, La Paz and city proper.

Bayan Muna-Iloilo spokesperson Winefredo Doblizo said the posters were destroyed or removed simultaneously between 1:30 a.m. and 6 a.m. on March 19 during a blackout that swept the entire city.

Aside from Bayan Muna's, the posters of Anakpawis, Gabriela Women's Party and Kabataan Party were removed or destroyed.

In the Jaro plaza, only the bamboo poles used as frame for the posters of the four party-list groups were left. The frame was left lying on the sidewalk, the groups said in their complaint.

This also happened in the designated poster areas at Plaza Libertad at the City Proper District and the plaza of La Paz District.

In Molo District, four posters of Bayan Muna were missing.

"We are reporting these incidents against our party-lists as we have adhered to Comelec rules and regulations," said Doblizo in the complaint.

He pointed out that the destruction of campaign materials happened even if the plazas were 30 to 50 meters from police stations.

He said the removal and destruction of these materials and the attack on a house used to reproduce the campaign materials also on March 19 were acts of "political repression done to harass, intimidate and scare our people to silence."

Doblizo said he hoped the Comelec would act on their complaint. *Nestor Burgos Jr., Inquirer Visayas*

Wanted in Davao: 'Green' candidates

DAVAO CITY—ENVIRONMENTALists here have launched a campaign dubbed "green idols" to convince voters to select candidates who have environmental protection in their platform.

But Jesuit priest Albert Alejo, executive director of the Mindanawon Initiatives for Cultural Dialogue Center of the Ateneo de Davao University, said on Thursday that the campaign would not involve endorsing a particular candidate.

ELEKSYON 2007

He said an environmentalist will instead help raise public awareness on who they are.

For local politics, Alejo said the group would present to the public the records of politicians, including pro-environment measures they sponsored or helped pass.

"The people will decide who among the aspiring public leaders will survive the environmental challenge being raised by various sectors. The people will judge these candidates based on their specific environmental agenda and their commitment to keep their promises," Alejo said.

Through the Green Vote 2007, the candidates will be invited to community forums, where they will be given the chance to present their environmental agenda.

Aside from raising awareness on the so-called green idols, there is a need to pick candidates who are not corrupt, he said.

"We will only put our lives in grave danger if we entrust our future to corrupt leaders by putting them in office," Alejo, who is also involved in the anti-corruption group Ehem!, said.

In Ozamiz City, a Catholic priest urged the voting public to rethink previous concepts on dealing with vote-buying.

Fr. Henry Revil, director of the archdiocesan Social Action Center (SAC), said that in order to completely rid the elections of the influence of money, voters must completely avoid involvement in the vote-buying process.

Revil said the popular notion of "taking the money but voting conscientiously" tolerated corruption.

"Selling one's vote" has a "very big relation" to the worsening problem on corruption in the country, he said.

Recently, the Hong Kong-based Political and Economic Risk Consultancy (PERC) ranked the Philippines as one of Asia's most corrupt countries. *Jeffrey Tupas and Ryan Rosauro, Inquirer Mindanao*

After rugged trip, GMA vows to improve Cordi roads

By Delmar Cariño
Inquirer Northern Luzon

KAPANGAN, BENGUET—PRESident Macapagal-Arroyo did a little campaigning for her Team Unity's senatorial candidates here on Monday but what might have won the people's hearts was her commitment to end the region's rugged and dusty roads.

Ms Arroyo, who decided to come by land to inaugurate the new town hall, looked tired and shaken when she emerged from her car after more than an hour's trip from Baguio City.

She immediately took to task the government's different agencies to source out funds for the repair of the road.

Ms Arroyo, noting that she had received many votes in Benguet during the 2004 elections, said her administration would try to repair and rehabilitate all national and provincial roads in the province.

During one of her visits to this town when she was still vice president, a helicopter bearing her husband, Jose Miguel Arroyo, crashed while she arrived safe as she opted to travel by land.

"I cannot forget when my husband took a chopper that crashed while I took the road and arrived safe," she said.

"I came to this stage and no one told me that my husband was actually in that municipal hall being treated by an Ibaloi tribeswoman, being massaged," she said.

"I then told myself that when I become president, I will repair the roads, including provincial roads," she said.

The rugged roads here before were considered the "Cordillera massage," she said.

"But now, many parts have already been concreted and asphalted by my administration," she said.

"But I am not contented because there are still other roads to be concreted," she added.

She said she noticed a gas filling station along the way called "Rugged Road Filling Station." But it cannot be that forever, she added.

As proof of her commitment, Ms Arroyo promised a P70-million package for the Tublay-Kapangan-Kibungan road, the same road she said she had traveled for one and a half hours from the Philippine Military Academy in Baguio where she keynoted the academy's graduation rites.

She asked Agrarian Reform Secretary Nasser Pangandaman to allocate P20 million from the agency's funds; Agriculture Secretary Arthur Yap, P20 million; Public Works Secretary Manuel Bonoan, P20 million; and the Benguet provincial government, P10 million, to rehabilitate the road.

ROUNDUP

Jeep hits cart; 1 dead

CITY OF MALOLOS—A man was killed and his three children were injured on Wednesday when a jeepney hit them along the MacArthur Highway in Barangay Tikay here. Police said Joel Alvarez, 50, died instantly while his children Angelo, 7, Jessica, 5, and Carol, 4, were taken to the hospital for treatment. Police said Alvarez was pushing his cart with his three children on it when the car bumped them. A jeepney closely following the car accidentally hit them. *Carmela Reyes, Inquirer Central Luzon*

2 dead in Quezon accident

LUCENA CITY—Two persons died and five others were seriously injured after the cargo truck they were riding suddenly turned turtle while traveling along the Maharlika Highway in Atimonan town on Wednesday. Police identified the victim as Cesar Bocobo, of Cabanatuan City and owner of the Isuzu truck, and Dexcel Bulaong, 4, of Aliaga, Nueva Ecija. Investigators said the truck which was traveling toward Bicol, lost its brakes while descending the downhill portion of the road situated in Barangay Malinao Ilaya. The vehicle swerved to the left portion of the highway and turned turtle. Both victims died on the spot after they were pinned down by the avalanche of at least 100 sacks of onions loaded in the truck. Truck driver Rogelio Bocobo, June Gatmaitan, Maricel Bana, Owen Paguin and Myra Bulaong, mother of Dexcel, were brought to the hospitals. The bodies of the two victims lie in a funeral parlor in Atimonan. *Delfin Mallari Jr., Inquirer Southern Luzon*

Man nabbed for extortion

LEGAZPI CITY—A man earlier reported to be victimizing chiefs of police in Bicol through a cell phone scam was arrested in an entrapment operation in a restaurant here at 10:30 p.m. Tuesday. The suspect was identified as George Frayna, 45, of University Homes, Washington Drive, Legazpi City. Chief Supt. Ricardo Padilla, Bicol police director, earlier said a group was imitating his voice calling police chiefs and directors, telling them their area was to pioneer a program for police retirees. The suspect would then ask the police chief to deposit P30,000, which would serve as an initial fund to expedite the release of the program's fund and that the regional office lacks the required money, thus, the city police office must first shoulder the expense subject to reimbursement. Padilla said the suspect was arrested upon the complaint of Alejandra Bansil, 35, incorporator and corporate secretary of the Pacific Rim Corp. in Ligao City. The suspect allegedly introduced himself as a police superintendent and demanded P1 million and two big bikes from the victim for the smooth operation of Small Town Lottery in Albay. *Ephraim Aguilar, Inquirer Southern Luzon*

Trader nabbed for gun possession

CAMP VICENTE LIM, Laguna—Police detained a businessman after they confiscated firearms and ammunitions during a raid at his house in Barangay Magdalo, Kawit, Cavite on Friday night. Cavite police chief Senior Supt. Fidel Posadas said Inocencio Dominguez, 46, of Magdalo, "is known in the area as a supplier of unlicensed guns. He also accepts pawned firearms," Posadas said. Recovered from Dominquez's house were a .22 cal. rifle, two .38 cal. revolvers, a .22 cal. revolver, a 12-gauge shotgun and hundreds of bullets for assorted firearms. Posadas said the suspect failed to present documents for the firearms and will be charged with illegal possession of firearms and violation of the election gun ban. *Marlon Ramos, Inquirer Southern Luzon*

Vans of rotten onions found

STA. MARIA, Bulacan—Police recovered in Norzagaray town two 40-foot container vans loaded with rotten onions believed to have been smuggled into the country. The vans were turned over by police to the provincial environment and natural resources office for disposition. Police said the vans were among the 10 trucks loaded with rotten onions that were supposed to be dumped in various towns in Bulacan. *Carmela Reyes, Inquirer Central Luzon*

1.3 tons of crabs served

LALA, LANAO DEL Norte—This town, considered the crab capital of the province, served 1.3 tons of cooked crabs to residents and visitors during the municipal charter day on Thursday.

Municipal agriculture officer Ronniel Baroy said crab growers in the town's coastal areas contributed the crabs, which were used to build the "Alimango (Crab) mountain."

He said that aside from the free crabs, highlights of the festival included the crab marathon, crab-eating and crab-cooking contests.

Mayor Santiago Bontilao said the town prided itself as one of the major producers of crab in Panguil Bay. Lala ships out at least 30 tons of crabs per week to other places of the country, including Metro Manila, he said.

Bontilao said the Alimango festival held during the town's anniversary was aimed at instilling among the locals the importance of the industry.

He said the municipal government has implemented measures, including a prohibition on the catching of juvenile crabs, to protect the industry. *Richel Umel, Inquirer Mindanao*

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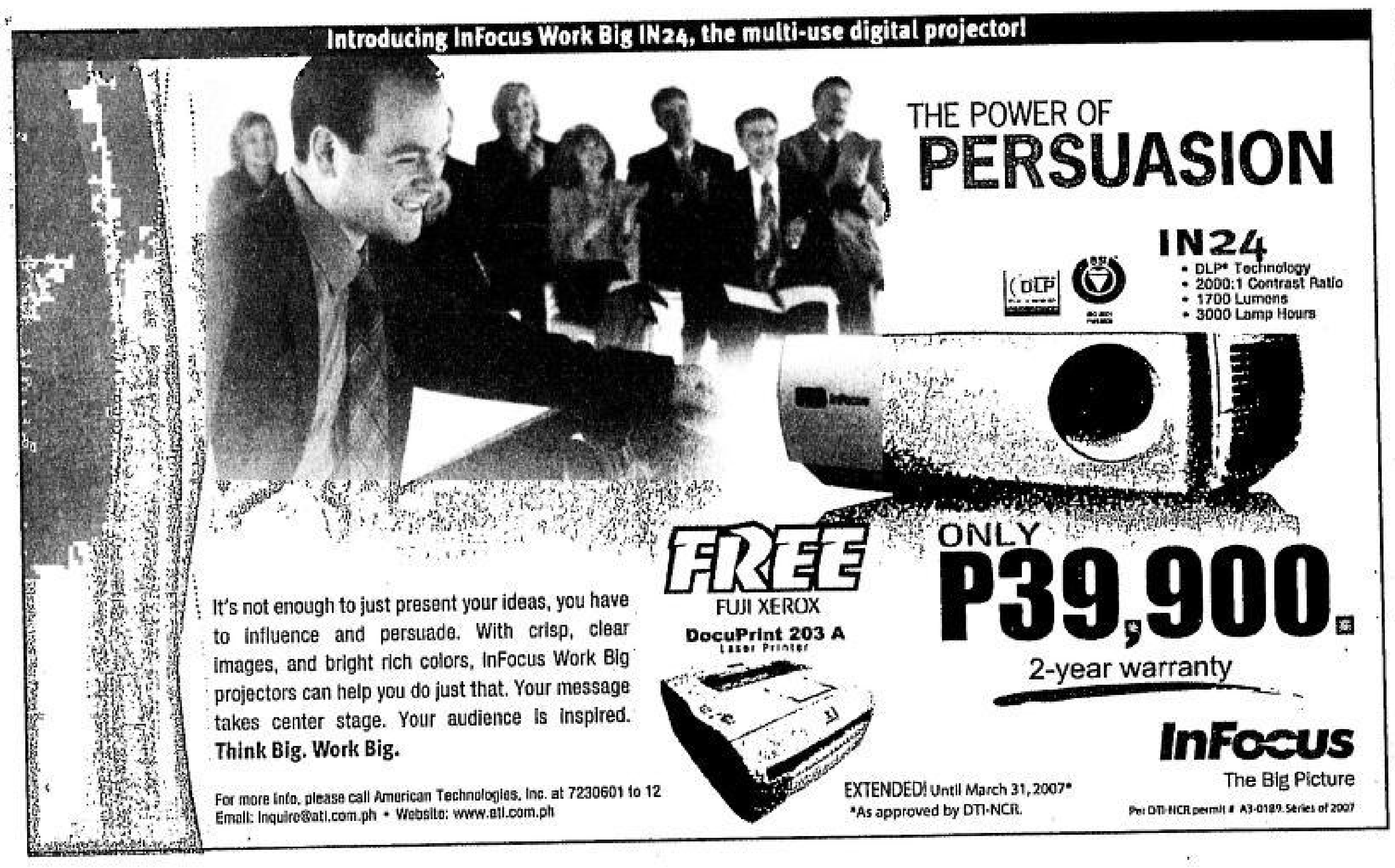

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Late SPORTS

COCA-COLA'S Anthony Johnson reaches for a rebound against Coca-Cola's Rosell Ellis. AUGUST DELA CRUZ

Aces tame Tigers; Kings rip Beermen

GAMES WEDNESDAY (*Araneta Coliseum*)
4:35 p.m.—Red Bull vs Air21
7:20 p.m.—Purefoods vs Talk 'N Text

By Musong R. Castillo

WITH MICHAEL JACKSON'S poignant "Gone too soon" as an accompanying piece, the Philippine Basketball Association last night bid former commissioner Emilio P. "Ibok" Bernardino farewell.

Tim Cone wore black to pay his respects, but not after guiding Alaska to a business-as-usual conquest of Coca-Cola, 106-100, as Willie Miller scored 13 of his 19 points in the fourth quarter to give the Aces a piece of second place in the Fiesta Cup eliminations.

Barangay Ginebra later inflicted a fifth straight loss on San Miguel Beer, 102-84, to make it a three-way tie for second with Alaska and Red Bull at 4-1.

Rod Nealy scattered 43 points and Rudy Hatfield, after crying during the short film clip on Bernardino before the game, finished with 22 markers, 11 rebounds and two blocks in leading the Kings to their fourth straight win.

The Aces, who are off to one of their best starts since their dynasty in the 1990s, built leads of as many as 17 points in the third period before encountering rough sailing in the end at the Araneta Coliseum.

In notching their second straight win, the Aces moved within a victory of duplicating their 2004 Fiesta Cup start with Galen Young, who, ironically, is the same import Cone tried to recruit for this tournament.

"Fortunately enough, he wasn't available and we were able to sign Rosell (Ellis)," Cone said.

Ellis did a little of everything, shooting 18 points, hauling down 11 rebounds, issuing seven assists and stealing the ball four times.

The Tigers dropped a second straight game and their third in the last four in slipping to an even 3-3.

More stories on A31 to 36

A huge Sunday crowd stood in silence as film clips of the former commissioner, who died Saturday, were shown with some players, who were warming up for the second game shedding tears.

Five players finished in double digits for Cone, with Jeffrey Cariaso netting 15 and Sonny Thoss and Renzy Bajar shooting 11 each.

"It was a tough battle because they (Tigers) play all the way to the end," Cone said.

Cone actually started the interview by praising the late commissioner.

"He was a very special person to me. He appointed me as national team coach in 1998 and stuck behind me all the way," Cone said in a somber tone. "That was the greatest honor I have ever had.

"I wanted to tell him that so many times before and I never did," Cone added. "And that upsets me the most."

The scores:

First Game

ALASKA 106—Miller 19, Ellis 18, Cariaso 15, Thoss 11, Bajar 11, Hugnatan 8, Ferriols 8, Juinio 6, Belasco 6, Laure 4, Aban 0, Singson 0.

COCA-COLA 100—Johnson 32, Peek 19, Avenido 18, Antonio 16, Miranda 7, Tolomia 4, Pacana 2, Arigo 2, Franco 0, Misolas 0.

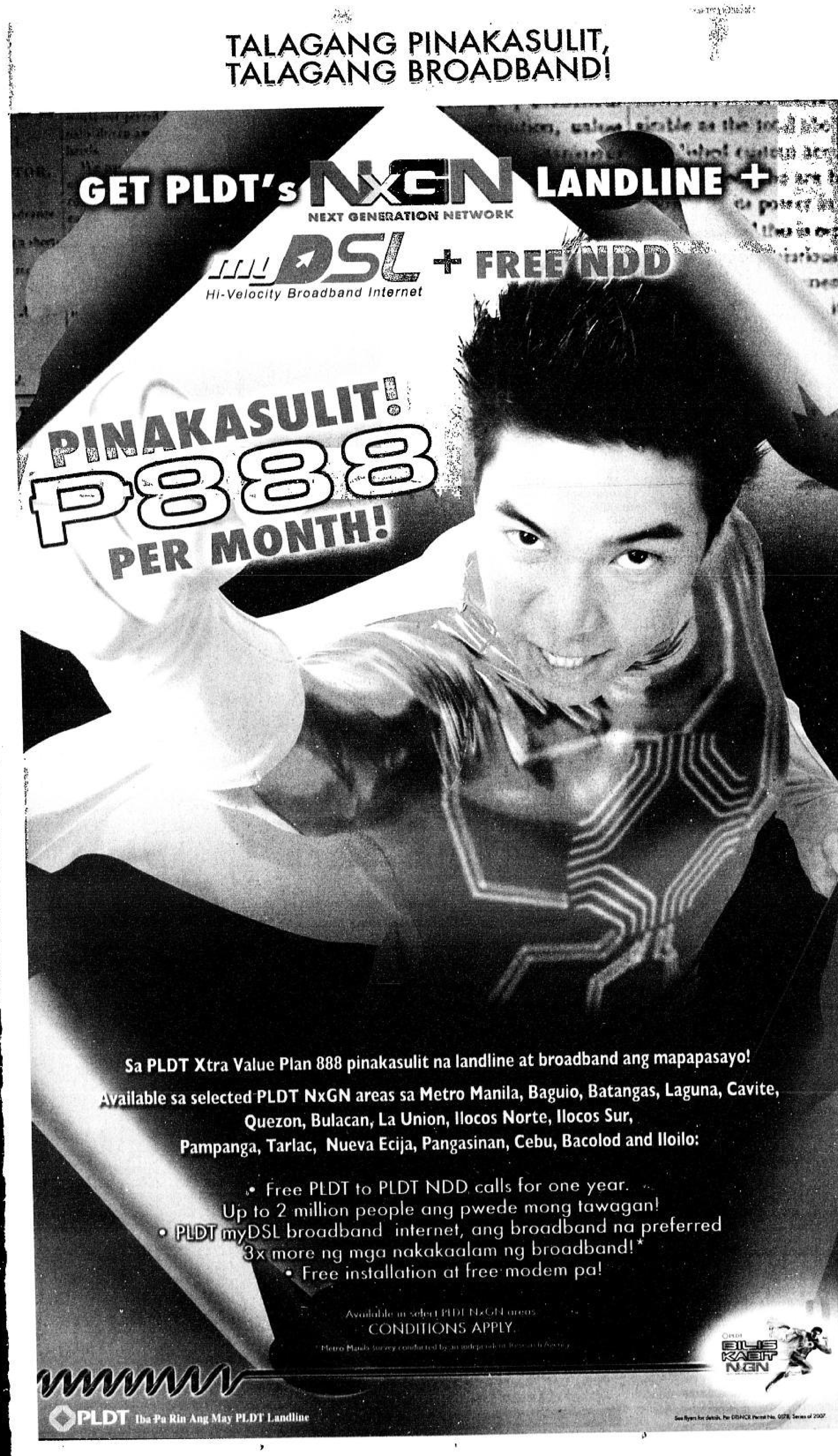
Quarters: 20-all, 51-39, 76-62, 106-100

Second Game

BARANGAY GINEBRA 102—Nealy 43, Hatfield 22, Tubid 14, Abarrientos 10, Macapagal 5, Echavez 2, Mamaril 2, Salvacion 2, Santos 2, Helper 0.

SAN MIGUEL 84—McMillan 41, Calaguio 11, Gonzales 7, Cablay 7, Espinas 6, Tenorio 5, Racela 5, Pena 2, Adducul 0, Adriano 0.

Quarters: 34-15, 48-49, 81-63, 102-84



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MJ's sister running for Manila mayor

By DJ Yap

FOLLOWING MUCH SPECULATION ABOUT his political plans in the May 14 elections, former Manila Rep. Mark Jimenez will not join the crowded race for the mayoralty of Manila after all.

Instead, his only sister Maria, an Assumption graduate who promotes the "science of angels," will.

Maria, a 59-year-old "angelogist," announced yesterday her intention to run for Manila mayor at the Dusit Hotel Nikko in Makati City after Jimenez gave her his blessing.

"I want to be in a position to make a difference in the lives of the people, especially the people of Manila," she told a news conference.

"I'm so lucky and so blessed that I have the means to help people through my brother," added Maria, who at times sounded like she was campaigning for Jimenez.

"He's influenced my life in many ways, especially in helping the poor. Mark gave me the opportunity to help. If not for him, I wouldn't have the resources to help others," Maria said.

Asked if her brother would wield any influence over her should she win, Maria said, "Oh yes, definitely."

She was later joined by her brother at what was supposed to be a convention of Aksyon Demokratiko leaders but seemed more like a political rally for Jimenez, despite his declaration that he was no longer running.

"From the very beginning, I said I didn't want to run," he said in a speech.

Jimenez returned to the Philippines in 2005 after serving time in an American prison following his extradition in 2002 for making illegal campaign contributions.

"They've been waiting for me (to declare my intention to run). They think they can beat my sister easily. They're wrong," he said to cheers from a group of local party leaders and candidates.

Maria said she was running for Manila mayor so she would be in a position to help more people in the city, particularly the poor.

She said she belongs to the "Celestial Angels Society of the Philippines," a 10-year-old organization that promotes awareness of angels.

She said: "I'm an angel jeweler. I have a flower shop with angels. I paint angels. I have angel cookbooks and I can bake angel cake. It's not a fad for me."

Three more hopefuls are expected to file their certificates of candidacy today at the Commission of Elections: Sen. Alfredo Lim, Ali Atienza—son of incumbent Manila Mayor Lito Atienza—and Rep. Rudy Bacani of the city's fourth district.

With Allison W. Lopez

METRO Citizen's call
0918-8985566

PLEASE look into why the Edsa-Connecticut stretch of Ortigas Avenue has been without street lights the past several months, making it a dangerous area for vehicles and pedestrians at night. Thank you.

—RICO AGCAOILI, 59, San Juan

Please call the attention of the Manila police to rampant snatching incidents in Ermita, especially in the area bounded by J. Bocobo, M. Orosa, A. Flores, Arquiza and Padre Faura Streets. The common denominators in the crimes committed here are the suspects are motorcycle-riding males and their victims are all women. It is ironic that the area is only a stone's throw away from Station No. 5 of the Manila Police District. What happened to the motorcycle fleet turned over to the police precisely to prevent these crime incidents?

—ANTONIO MALLORCA, 66, Padre Faura, Manila

Walang disiplina ang mga motoristang papunta sa SM and Lagro (Motorists bound for SM and Lagro are lacking in discipline). They occupy three lanes, so practically one lane is left for motorists on their way to Commonwealth (Marcos) Avenue. Can anyone do something about this?

—GERRY, 46, Regalado, Fairview, Quezon City

Smut tabloids are being sold at the Banawe overpass in front of McDonalds. Calling authorities concerned. More power and thank you for calling attention to water leaks near Banawe.

—ERICH, 39, Quezon City

Street diggings in our barangay make me sick. They make walking on the street an unpleasant experience, especially at night at Barangay Mariblo de Vera, Quezon City.

—APRIL GOMEZ, 21, Quezon City

I am perhaps one among thousands of commuters who use the short bridge near the Market Market area daily to get into the northbound lane of C5 on my way home. There is also this problem with turning left into C5 because jeepneys waiting for passengers clog what is already a very busy intersection. Adding to this problem are pedestrians crossing the intersection. Bonifacio traffic aides simply ignore them. Now if the jeepneys were moved a few meters away from the intersection, you can just imagine the improvement in traffic flow in the area. Help!

—BOB, 41, Quezon City

Rizal policemen alerted vs attacks

By Kristine L. Alave

RIZAL PROVINCIAL POLICE COMMANDER, Senior Supt. Freddie Panen, has ordered increased police visibility and patrols in the province ahead of the March 29 founding anniversary of the New People's Army.

Panen said the Rizal police force would be on "normal alert" unless an NPA attack occurs, which he said was unlikely as several military and police battalions, like the Philippine National Police's Special Action Force, are stationed in the province.

"Our preparations are intact ... We have placed ourselves on vigilant status," Panen said in a phone interview.

The official said he has directed increased police visibility in urban spots, vital installations like malls and transport terminals.

He has also ordered the establishment of checkpoints and chokepoints throughout Rizal, as well as more combat patrols in the rural areas.

Panen's order was issued amid several rebels attacks in Southern Luzon in the past few weeks.

Yesterday, NPA rebels and government troops clashed in the border of Laguna and Quezon provinces. A military soldier was wounded while an undetermined number of rebels were killed.

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GANITO KALAKI ANG BANTA NG BIRD FLU

Wala pang bird flu sa Pilipinas, pero kelangan pa ring mag-ingat.
Ugaliing maghugas ng kamay at huwag basta-bastang humawak
ng ibong may sakit, naghihingalo, o patay na.

Bird flu: Kayang iwasan, kayang pigilan.

Maghanda at matuto. Pumunta sa **www.iwasbirdflu.com**

Keeping the Philippines Bird Flu-Free: It's in our Hands

That's the good news. And it's well worth repeating: The Philippines, as you read this, is bird flu-free. But that's a headline that can change quicker than you can fry an egg if we aren't careful.

Birds are very much a part of our daily lives. From the pigeons we take care of to the chicken in rotisseries to the streetside grills peddling chicken feet and isaw. To our kitchens where tinola innocently simmers. To fast food chains overflowing with the latest crispy and juicy offerings and bus vendors pitching quail eggs. To the fertilizer makers and cockfighting aficionados. We're surrounded by birds and their byproducts, and it's all well and good for now.

But should bird flu make it to our shores, we'll be in for some difficult times.

Which is why numerous organizations have banded together to stop bird flu from entering the country, each in their own way. Some try spreading information. Some try to lobby for additional laws against the smuggling of wild birds. Others look for better enforcement of existing regulations.

But addressing the bird flu scare isn't a top secret, for-experts-only thing. It needs every one of us to pitch in. And we're not talking about massive contributions of time and money. Far from it.

We're talking about practicing Iwas Bird Flu habits. And it all begins with clean hands. The thorough and regular washing of hands will do more for arresting the spread of any virus than you may realize. It's also helpful to use at least 70% isopropyl alcohol should soap and water be unavailable for whatever reason.

Proper cough habits are important too. Cover your nose and mouth with tissue or a handkerchief every time you sneeze, cough or blow your nose. If you don't have tissue, cough into your sleeve. And while few of us encounter live birds on a usual basis, common sense also demands we keep away from sick or dying birds.

(For more information on specific signs of bird flu, please visit www.iwasbirdflu.com).

Arming ourselves with these three deceptively simple steps is the best defense we have against the avian influenza that is sweeping through most of Asia and the rest of the world.

Of course, there are other things concerned individuals can do, like reporting cases of chickens, ducks or birds inexplicably dying in large numbers to your local Veterinary, Agricultural or Health Officer or Barangay Captain, or the bird flu hotline. You can continue enjoying your favorite poultry dishes, just make sure all chickens and eggs are thoroughly cleaned and cooked. Bring your tinola to a boil, grill or fry chicken till its juices are clear, not pink. Make sure eggs and balut are fully cooked, not *malasado*.

But it all begins with keeping our hands clean, and keeping them to ourselves.

From the
People of Japan

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IWAS BIRD FLU

Signs of Bird Flu

- Sudden death without clinical signs
- Lack of energy and appetite
- Decreased egg production
- Soft shelled or misshapen eggs
- Swelling of the head, eyelids, comb, wattles and hocks
- Purpled discoloration of the wattles, combs and legs
- Nasal discharge
- Coughing, sneezing
- Incoordination
- Diarrhea

Tips on how to protect yourself from Bird Flu

- **Practice proper hygiene.**
  Practice proper hand-washing before and after handling poultry.
- **Protect the children.**
  Do not allow children to play with birds.
- **Protect yourself and your workers.**
  Wear proper protective clothing and vaccinate workers and handlers when possible.
- **Protect your neighbors.**
  Report cases of sick, dying, or dead birds to the bird flu hotline or to your local veterinary clinic.

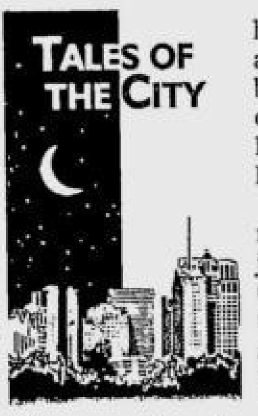
Call the Bird Flu Hotline:
925-9999

Accidental reporter is now DOJ prosecutor

By Candy Palenzuela-Dalizon
Contributor

HE ONCE CHASED NEWSMAKERS, NEVER imagining that one day, he would be on the other side of the fence.

As senior state prosecutor of the Department of Justice, Emmanuel "Manny" Velasco is often in the news, arguing in behalf of the government in several high profile cases.



For seven years, however, Velasco was a reporter for the broadsheet Malaya, covering the Eastern Police District in Metro Manila.

"I was an accidental reporter. I needed a job because I wanted to support myself through law school. It so happened that my 'brod' from the Phi Chiro fraternity, Noel Albano, was then the editor of Malaya and he gladly accepted me," he told the INQUIRER.

He recalled that his first story was about a child in Cainta, Rizal who died after eating a frog which turned out to be poisonous.

"I was very happy when I saw my byline for the first time. I treated my fellow reporters to a couple of drinks that day," he said.

From the EPD, Velasco moved on to different beats, covering the national police and military.

In 1991, he helped form the Philippine National Police Press Corps and also became a member of the Defense Press Corps.

Of his experiences as a reporter, he said that the one that sticks out in his memory was the discovery of two bodies in Antipolo City on Nov. 13, 1986.

The day before, Kilusang Mayo Uno chair Rolando Olalia and his driver, Leonor Alay-ay, had failed to come home from a union meeting.

"It was early in the morning when I and my fellow Malaya reporter, Sonia Dipasupil, who covered the defense beat, received reports that the body of a man suspected to be Alay-ay was found in Antipolo. After we got there and saw the body, I radioed Malaya and told Yvonne Chua, who was then on the desk: 'We found Alay-ay. He is dead and most probably, *Ka* Lando Olalia is, too," Velasco recalled.

Hours later, Olalia's body was also discovered. His eyes had been gouged out and he was dressed only in his underwear. "His hands were raised as if he was crying out for justice. A newspaper had been stuffed in his mouth and when the police took it out, it was that day's edition of the Malaya with the banner 'KMU–We'll launch nationwide strike in case of a coup,'" Velasco said.

In college, Velasco took up Economics at the University of Sto. Tomas. Coming from a family of lawyers, it was but natural that he would develop an interest in law. His ambition, however, aside from becoming a lawyer, was to join the National Bureau of Investigation and be an agent like his father, Epimaco Velasco.

After the younger Velasco took his oath as a lawyer on May 8, 1991, he left Malaya and applied for a job at the NBI.

At that time, Epimaco was the head of the bureau's Metro Manila office. He was already a well-known figure, having killed in a shootout Leonardo Manicio Sr., alias Nardong Putik, a notorious gangster from Cavite who became a folk hero.

But instead of being pleased, Velasco said his father tore his application in front of him and other NBI officials.

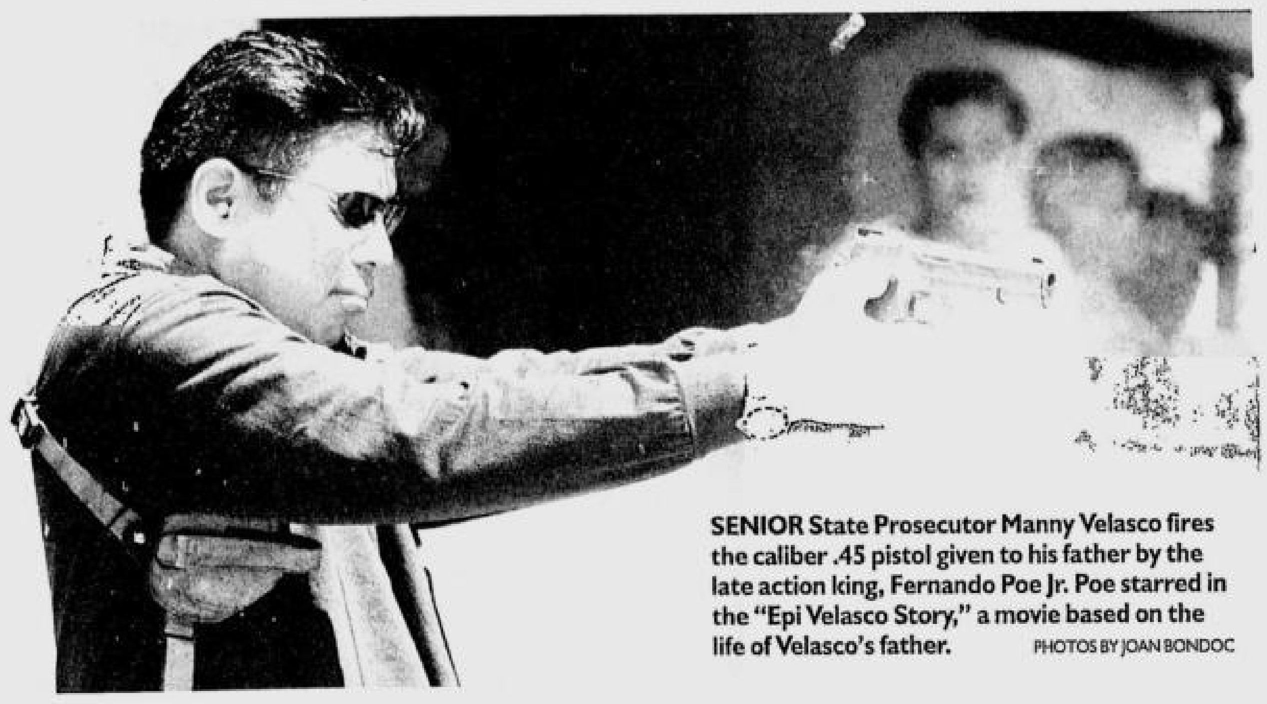
"He told me, '*Tama na ang isang Velasco sa NBI.*'"

Velasco said he understood his father's reaction. "He didn't want me to be exposed to the dangers he had faced as a young agent. He also didn't want me to be the subject of intrigues because he was already a ranking NBI official then," he added.

The elder Velasco spoke to then Justice Secretary Franklin Drilon and Undersecretary Silvestre Bello III about the possibility of his son joining the department.

Ironically, Epimaco now wishes that his son had joined the NBI instead.

"He said he regrets his decision because I am now also exposed to the dangers and threats faced by a prosecutor—minus the status, privileges and protection that a regular NBI agent enjoys. He told me that had he allowed me to join the NBI then, I would probably already be an NBI official with my own security detail," Velasco said with a laugh.



SENIOR State Prosecutor Manny Velasco fires the caliber .45 pistol given to his father by the late action king, Fernando Poe Jr. Poe starred in the "Epi Velasco Story," a movie based on the life of Velasco's father. PHOTOS BY JOAN BONDOC

HAVING grown up in the care of his mother and grandmother, Velasco said he was "sort of *baklain* (effeminate)" as a boy. This prompted his father, former National Bureau of Investigation Director Epimaco Velasco, to introduce him to guns.

DID YOU KNOW

EMILIO Aguinaldo College in Ermita, Manila—named after the country's first president—was called the Marian School of Midwifery when it was established in 1957 by National Scientist Paulo Campos. It changed its name in 1977. The former midwifery school now offers courses like criminology, business administration, liberal arts and medicine.

Cyril L. Bonabente, Inquirer Research

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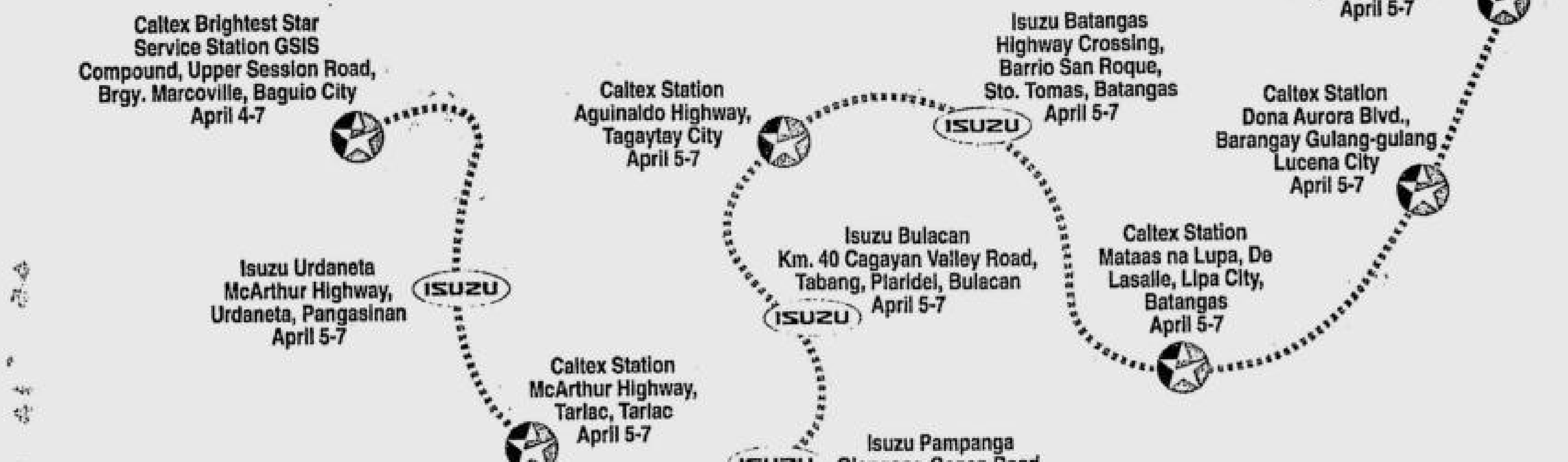

Caltex Brightest Star Service Station GSIS Compound, Upper Session Road, Brgy. Marcoville, Baguio City
April 4-7

Isuzu Urdaneta McArthur Highway, Urdaneta, Pangasinan
April 5-7

Caltex Station McArthur Highway, Tarlac, Tarlac
April 5-7

Isuzu Pampanga Olongapo-Gapan Road, Dolores, City of San Fernando, Pampanga
April 5-7

Isuzu Bulacan Km. 40 Cagayan Valley Road, Tabang, Plaridel, Bulacan
April 5-7

Caltex Station Aguinaldo Highway, Tagaytay City
April 5-7

Isuzu Batangas Highway Crossing, Barrio San Roque, Sto. Tomas, Batangas
April 5-7

Caltex Station Mataas na Lupa, De Lasalle, Lipa City, Batangas
April 5-7

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Mula sa PCSO

Maraming salamat po!

Lubos na nagpapasalamat ang Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office (PCSO) sa ating mga kababayan na nagsilbing daan upang tugunan ang medikal na pangangailangan ng may 16,104 Pilipinong iginupo ng karamdaman mula Enero hanggang Pebrero ng taong ito. Umabot sa halagang P301,388,044.77 ang itinugon ng PCSO para sa gamot at hospitalisasyon. Nagawa po namin na tulungan ang mga kapuspalad maysakit na ito dahil na rin sa inyong walang-sawang pagtaguyod sa mga produkto ng PCSO tulad ng Lotto, Sweepstakes Keno at STL.

Gaya ng aming naunang naipaliwanag na, P3 sa bawat P10 taya sa lotto ay napupunta sa PCSO Charity Fund. Ang pondong ito ay ginamit noong 2006 upang magbigay ng tulong medical sa 107,339 na indibidwal sa pamamagitan ng Individual Medical Assistance Program (IMAP) na umabot sa halagang P1,997,076,356.33 para sa gamot at hospitalisasyon sa buong bansa. Ang kabuuang tulong na naipamahagi ng PCSO sa pamamagitan ng Charity Fund sa taong 2006 ay ang sumusunod:

Bilang ng Pasyente	Halaga	Lugar
12,422	P33,794,825.27	Northern & Central Luzon
12,618	P36,986,731.80	Southern Tagalog & Bicol Region
20,741	P104,548,087.44	Visayas & Mindanao Region
61,558	P1,699,995,721.01	PCSO Main Office

Bukod pa sa direktang pagtulong ng PCSO sa mga lumalapit sa aming tanggapan, ang Charity Fund din ay tumutulong sa mabilisang pagtugon sa bayarin ng mga kababayan nating nakaratay sa mga pagamutan sa pamamagitan ng Endowment Fund Program.

Simula Enero 2006 hanggang sa kasalukuyan, ang endowment fund program ay nakakatulong ng mahigit P92,820,000 sa 88 na pagamutan.

Tumutulong din ang PCSO sa pamamagitan ng pagbibigay ng humigit kumulang na P34M para sa gastusin ng 55 socio-civic organizations.

Region/ Province	Name of Organization
NCR	
1. Quezon City	Kadiwa Sa Pagkapari Foundation., Inc.
2. Quezon City	The Nutrition Foundation Of The Philippines., Inc.
3. Quezon City	Philippine Tuberculosis Society,
4. Quezon City	Quezon Institute, Inc.
5. Quezon City	St. Martin De Porres Day Care Center
6. Quezon City	Silong Tanglaw Fdn, Inc.
7. Quezon City	Bahay Pangarap
8. Quezon City	Boy's Home Unit Parang Marikina City
9. Marikina City	Cribs Philippines., Inc.
10. Marikina City	Cribs Philippines., Inc.(Receiving Home)
11. Quezon City	Ephpheta Fdn. For The Blind
12. Quezon City	Foundling Home
13. Quezon City	Girl's Home Unit
14. Quezon City	Golden Acres
15. Quezon City	Good Shepherd Convent
16. Quezon City	Innerwheel Club Of Quezon City
17. Quezon City	Luwalhati Ng Maynila Home For The Aged
18. Quezon City	Pro-life Phils. Fnd., Inc.
19. Quezon City	Reception And Study Center For Children., Q.c.
20. Quezon City	St. Martin De Porres Ctr. (Medical Care Program)
21. Manila	Damayan
22. Manila	Hospicio De San Jose
23. Manila	Tahanan Outreach Project & Services., Inc. Justice Corazon Juliano-Agrava Center 5634241
24. Manila	Laura Vicuña Foundation., Inc.
25. San Juan, MM	White Cross
26. San Juan, MM	St. Martin De Porres Charity Hospital
27. Manila	St. Clare Patronage For The Sick Poor
28. Manila	Don Bosco Youth Center
29. Manila	Patronato De Nuestra Señora De Lourdes Charity Clinic
30. Manila	Asociacion De Damas De Filipinas, Inc.
31. Manila	Friendship Home Fr. Luis Amigo
32. Manila	Reception & Action Study Center
33. Manila	Phil Bond Of Mercy
34. Manila	Samaritan Paco Charities, Inc.
35. Manila	The Manila Youth Reception Center
36. Manila	Welcome House
37. Parañaque	St. Paregrine Devt. Center
38. Caloocan	Bahay Kakayahan
REGION II	
39. Isabela	La Salette Pamana Fdn., Inc. Santiago City, Isabela
REGION V	
40. Naga City	Daughters Of Mary Mother Of The Church
41. Sorsogon City	Ladies Charity Home For The Aged
42. Sorsogon City	Louise De Marillac, Tugos, Sorsogon Ecology Park, Tugos,
43. Albay	Sta. Luisa De Marillac, Libon Albay St.
44. Iriga City	Servants Of Jesus Of Charity (032) 2322442 / 5253647
45. Naga City	Villa Marillac Comm. Center
REGION VI	
46. Negros Occ	Bacolod Boy's Home
47. Negros Occ	Bugtaw Ginikanan Ass
48. Negros Occ	Holy Infant Nursery Fnd.
49. Negros Occ	St. Vincent's Home
REGION VII	
50. Cebu City	Asilo De La Milagrosa, Inc.
51. Cebu City	Handicapped's Anchor Is Chirst
52. Cebu City	Mother Seton Dev. Center
53. Cebu City	Villa Maria Good Shepherd Sisters., Inc.
REGION X	
54. Cagayan de Oro City	Mother Teresa Foundation, Inc.
REGION XI	
55. Davao City	Foundation Of Balay Pasilugan

Malaking bagay din po ang inyong patuloy na pagsuporta sa mga revenue projects ng PCSO upang magbigay-tulong sa ating mga hospital at health centers na nangangailangan ng medical equipment at tulong pinansyal para sa naghihirap na kababayan sa kanilang lugar. Narito po ang bilang ng natulungang probinsiya at munisipyo mula 2006 hanggang sa unang dalawang buwan ng 2007:

Donation of Medical Equipment

Bilang ng Natulungang munisipyo/ probinsiya	Buwan	Halaga
2006		
2	Enero	4,900,000.00
3	Pebrero	8,050,000.00
9	Marso	15,184,850.00
1	Abril	7,000,000.00
5	Mayo	3,400,100.00
9	Hunyo	8,984,070.00
6	Hulyo	92,043,400.00
2	Agosto	245,330.00
2	Setyembre	20,224,860.00
2	Oktubre	6,295,000.00
2	Nobyembre	9,195,000.00
2	Disyembre	700,000.00
45		**176,222,610.00**
2007		
5	Enero	780,840.75
4	Pebrero	25,138,130.00
9		**25,918,970.75**

Dalangin po namin na ang pagkakawanggawa at kaakibat na suportang ipinamalas ng ating mga kababayan sa mga programa at proyekto ng PCSO ay hindi mapagkamalang gawaing pamumulitika lamang. Ang panahon ng kampaya sa eleksiyon ay hindi dahilan upang magkaroon ng 'moratorium' o tigil-pagtulong sa ating mga kababayang naratay dahil sa karamdaman – tulad ng atake sa puso, kanser, kidney failure, liver disease, tuberculosis, at iba pang sakit.

Ang PCSO po ay ahensiya ng kawanggawa at mananatiling ahensiya para sa ating mahihirap na kababayan. Lubos po kaming nagpapasalamat sa patuloy niyong suporta.

MULI, MARAMING, MARAMING, SALAMAT PO!

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UN council slaps new sanctions on Iraq

UNITED NATIONS—IRAN REJECTED A REPEATed demand by the UN Security Council to suspend uranium enrichment work after the 15-nation body imposed arms and financial sanctions on Tehran.

At the same time major powers, who drafted the resolution, immediately offered new talks on Saturday and renewed their offer of an economic and technological incentive package.

But the sanctions would stay in place until Iran halts the enrichment of uranium and the reprocessing of spent nuclear fuel, which can be used to make a bomb or to generate electricity.

Iran's Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki, who is holding a press conference on Sunday, told the Security Council after the vote that it had been abused and manipulated by some of its members to take "unjustifiable action" against Iran's peaceful nuclear program.

"I can assure you that pressure and intimidation will not change Iranian policy," he said. "Suspension is neither an option nor a solution."

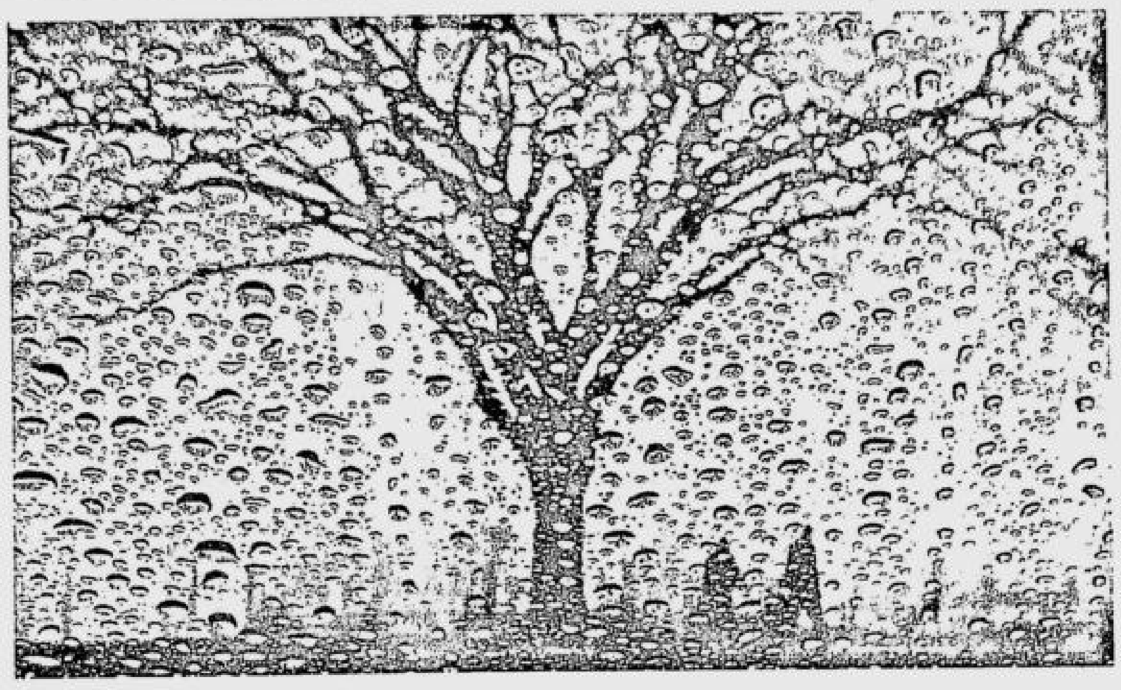
"The world must know—and it does—that even the harshest political and economic sanctions or other threats are far too weak to coerce the Iranian nation to retreat from their legal and legitimate demands," Mottaki said.

Main provisions of the resolution go beyond the nuclear sphere by banning Iran's exports of conventional arms and freezing financial assets abroad of 28 Iranian individuals and entities, including its Bank Sepah, and the commanders of the Revolutionary Guards, including those said to be involved in supporting military movements abroad.

The new measures are a follow-up to a resolution adopted on Dec. 23 banning trade in sensitive nuclear materials and ballistic missiles, as well as also freezing assets of individuals and institutions associated with atomic programs.

The foreign ministers of countries that drafted the resolution—the United States, Britain, France, Russia, China and Germany—proposed further talks with Iran "to see if a mutually acceptable way can be found to open negotiations," according to a joint statement read by British Ambassador Emyr Jones Parry. *Reuters*

AMBASSADORS gather during a United Nations Security Council meeting on broader sanctions against Iran March 24 in New York. AFP



RAIN OUTSIDE MY CAR

Photographed through a windshield, two people walk in the rain beneath a tree on the campus of McDaniel College in Westminster, Md, March 24. AP

48 killed in brutal Iraq attacks

BAGHDAD—SUICIDE ATTACKS waged by a lorry driver posing as a goods merchant and a bomber in a sweet shop killed dozens of Iraqis on Saturday, underscoring the vicious nature of a changing insurgency.

In the most lethal attack on a day that left 48 people dead, a bomber killed 20 Iraqis after driving a lorry packed with explosives and bricks into a tightly guarded police compound in Baghdad's militant stronghold of Dura.

Masquerading as a driver bringing building materials for construction work being carried on at the site, he steered the truck past the first police checkpoint before blowing up both body and vehicle, a security official said.

Sixteen policemen, two detainees in police custody and two civilians were killed as the blast tore through the front of the police station and gouged a giant crater out of the ground, splattering body parts and debris.

Another 26 people were wounded in the blast, the latest attack to underscore the limits of a massive US-led security operation launched last month in a bid to quell the raging insurgency and sectarian warfare in Baghdad.

"There were many corpses lying in the compound of the police station. Some of the bodies were burnt, while some had shrapnel wounds ... and many cars (were) destroyed," said one US soldier.

Dura, a known haunt of al-Qaida in Iraq fundamentalists, is one of the most volatile districts of Baghdad where Iraqi and US forces have concentrated raids in a huge security operation launched last month to try to quell unrest.

The efforts of around 90,000 Iraqi and US troops have seen a reduction in execution-style killings, considered the hallmark of Shiite militias, but spectacular bombings, long favored by Sunni insurgents, have continued.

In northern Iraq, a suicide bomber blew himself up in a sweet shop in the town of Tal Afar, killing 10 people and wounding three, the town's mayor Najim Abdallah al-Juburi said.

Also among Saturday's dead were 10 killed by another truck bomb that heavily damaged a small Shiite religious site just as worshippers finished prayers in the mixed sectarian town of Al-Haswa, police lieutenant Haider al-Shammari said.

Another eight Iraqis were killed in other attacks and 10 bullet-riddled corpses were found in Baghdad. *AFP*

WORLDBRIEFS

Strong in central Japan, 1 killed

TOKYO—A strong earthquake with a magnitude of 7.1 jolted the coastal area of central Japan on Sunday, killing at least one person and injuring around 85, Japanese officials and media said. At least nine houses collapsed, landslides were triggered and roads buckled when the quake struck at 9:42 a.m., public broadcaster NHK and Kyodo news agency said. In October 2004, an earthquake with a magnitude of 6.8 struck the Niigata region in northern Japan, killing 65 people and injuring more than 3,000. That was the deadliest quake since a magnitude 7.3 tremor hit the city of Kobe in 1995, killing more than 6,400. *Reuters*

Hong Kong leader gets new term

HONG KONG—Hong Kong's China-backed leader Donald Tsang was awarded another term in office on Sunday when the handful of city elites allowed to vote easily re-elected him over a pro-democracy challenger. The 800 members of Hong Kong's election committee are the only people in this territory of nearly seven million people allowed to vote for the chief executive, and they gave Tsang a 649-123 win over Alan Leong, officials said. But for the first time since Britain handed Hong Kong back to China in 1997, the race for leader was contested. Leong had hoped his presence would help nudge Hong Kong down the road to full democracy. The 62-year-old Tsang, a career civil servant, turned up to vote in one of his trademark bow ties but refused to speak to reporters. Hong Kong, one of the world's main hubs of international finance, has been facing growing competition from cities in mainland China and grappling with a serious pollution problem that has made it less attractive to business leaders. Governed by the rule of law and driven by the freest of free markets, Hong Kong has unique status in China—a policy former Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping described as "one country, two systems" when the 1997 handover took place. *AFP*

Florida official who planned sex change fired

LARGO, FLA.—The longtime city manager here was fired early Saturday morning, one month after he disclosed his plans to seek a sex change. The City Commission voted 5-2 to dismiss the man, Steven B. Stanton, after a six-hour hearing in which he and his supporters argued that he could do his job just as well once he became a woman. Some commissioners said they had voted to fire Stanton not because he wanted to become a woman, but because he had violated their trust and caused a major disruption. Stanton, 48, said afterward that he had not decided whether to take legal action against the city, which is west of Tampa and has about 76,000 residents. He has a wife and a 13-year-old son. The City Commission had generally praised Stanton in performance reviews, and it gave him a raise last year. But within a week of the newspaper's report, the commission voted to begin the process of firing him. Stanton filed an appeal on March 8 in hopes of keeping his job of 14 years, which paid $140,000 a year. *NYT*

Indonesian 'mud volcano'

JAKARTA—A police probe into the cause of the "mud volcano" that has made 15,000 people homeless in Indonesia's East Java, points to negligence by a mining company, reports said Sunday. Mud began to flow out of a gas exploratory drilling well operated by Pt Lapindo Brantas in Sidoarjo, East Java in May 2006. The mud has since flooded some 600 hectares of land and submerged whole villages. *AFP*

Iran says UK sailors admit illegal entry

TEHRAN—IRAN SAID ON SATURday that 15 British service personnel detained by its navy off Iraq had admitted to violating its territorial waters, rejecting demands from London for their swift release.

The semi-official Fars news agency said the 15 naval personnel, who include a woman, had been brought to the capital Tehran for questioning about what they were doing during what Britain insists was a "routine" anti-smuggling patrol on Friday.

Armed forces general staff spokesperson General Alireza Afshar said the 15 had admitted to their interrogators that they knew they were inside Iranian waters, contrary to the insistence of the British defense ministry that they had remained in Iraqi waters.

"They are currently being questioned and have admitted to violating the territorial waters of the Islamic repubic," Afshar told the Fars agency.

He told the Arabic language service of state television: "We have solid evidence that they were detained in our territorial waters. They themselves have confessed and admitted their mistake."

He accused the British military of seeking to "create a climate of tension at a moment when a (UN Security Council) resolution on Iran (over its controversial nuclear program) is to be put to the vote despite the fact that Iran seeks calm and stability in the region." "The questioning of the British sailors is continuing to try to establish their real intentions," he added.

A senior defense source told the Sun tabloid that the sailors "did the right thing. They were heavily outnumbered and outgunned. There was no point in putting up a fight. No shots were exchanged and from what we understand so far, none of our people has been harmed." *AFP*

Pope hits EU for excluding God

VATICAN CITY—POPE BENEDICT strongly criticized the European Union on Saturday for excluding a mention of God and Europe's Christian roots in declarations marking the 50th anniversary of its founding.

In a toughly-worded speech to European bishops, Benedict said Europe was committing a form of "apostasy of itself" and was thus doubting its own identity.

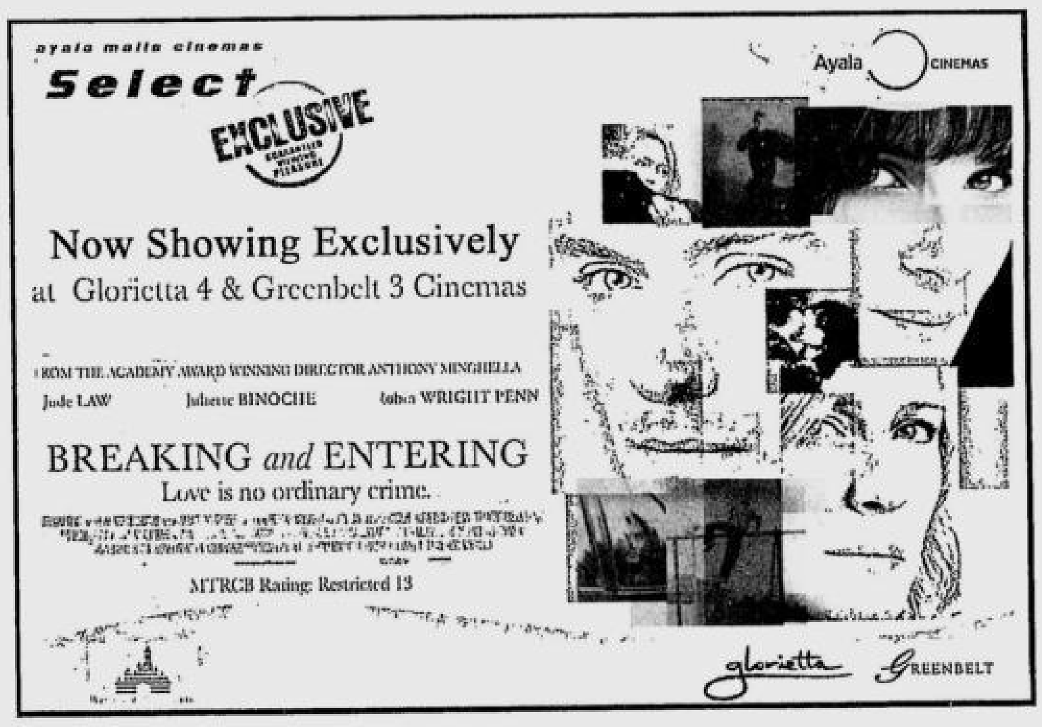
The Pope, who like his predecessor John Paul often calls for a mention of God and Christianity in the European Constitution, said leaders could not exclude values that helped forge the "very soul" of the continent.

"If on the 50th anniversary of the Treaty of Rome the governments of the union want to get closer to their citizens, how can they exclude an element as essential to the identity of Europe as Christianity, in which the vast majority of its people continue to identify," he said.

"Does not this unique form of apostasy of itself, even before God, lead it (Europe) to doubt its very identity?" Apostasy is a total desertion of or departure from one's religion.

One of the Pope's compatriots, German Chancellor Angela Merkel, aims to relaunch the EU constitution and last month made a plea for the bloc to include references to Christian roots.

Plans to include such a reference in the original EU treaty, rejected by French and Dutch voters in 2005, were blocked by French President Jacques Chirac. *AP*



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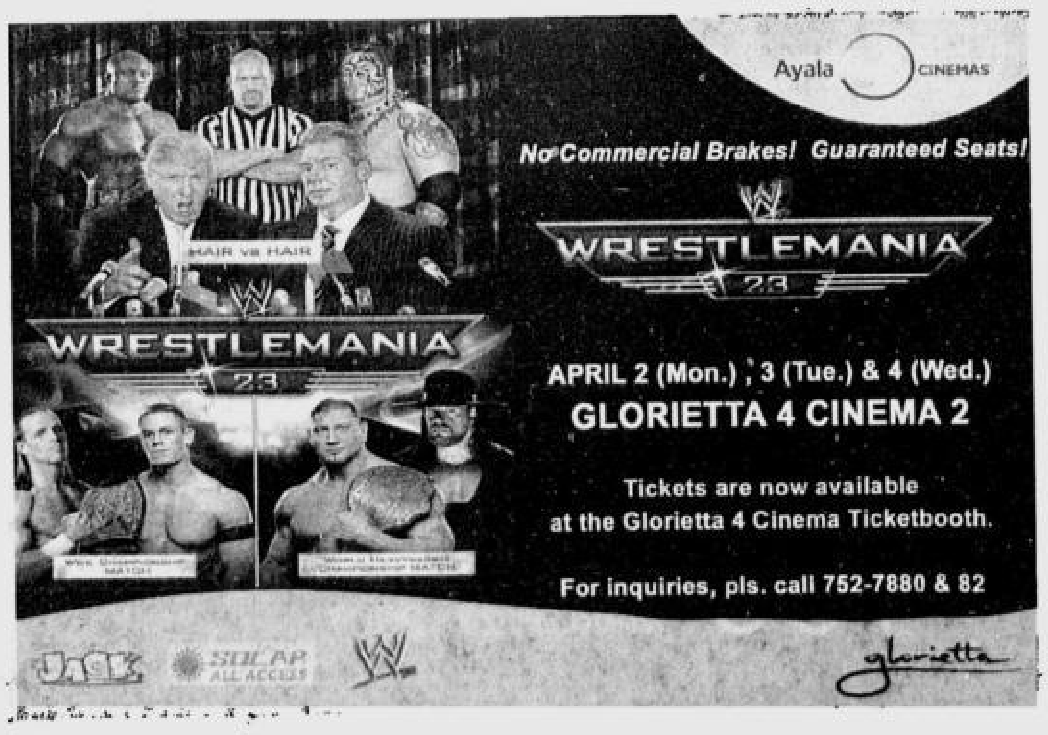

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BSCP OPEN

Spotlight falls on Pagulayan, the 'Volcano'

ALL EYES WILL BE ON defending champion Alex "The Lion" Pagulayan and double world pool champion Ronato "Volcano" Alcano as the 2nd BSCP National Pool Championships kicks off at the Ninoy Aquino Stadium today.

ALCANO

PAGULAYAN

The two will be the stars to watch as the tournament will be missing legends Efren "Bata" Reyes and Francisco "Django" Bustamante, who left last night to fulfill commitments abroad.

Pagulayan, who won the inaugural staging of this tournament by beating Gandy Valle last year, is seeded No. 2 in the tournament, behind Alcano, the reigning world champion in 9-ball and 8-ball.

Pagulayan is coming off a big win in the Japan 9-ball Open recently.

Alcano, seeded No. 1 in the tournament, kicks off his bid against Japan-based Roel Esquillo.

Valle, last year's runner-up, opens his campaign against Jech Jech Lemen in the event that offers a total prize of P500,000.

The drawing of lots was held yesterday at the Raya Sports Office in Makati City under the supervision by BSCP chair and Raya Sports president Yen Makabenta, tournament director Mario Aquino and national coach Ramon Ancaja.

According to Makabenta, the seeding in the 9-ball tournament, which will use the alternate break format and will feature race-to-9 matches in the preliminaries, was based on last year's performance of the country's top pool stars.

This explains why defending champion Pagulayan is ranked behind Alcano.

Third-seed Dennis Orcollo, known in local pool circuit as the king of the money game, takes on Allan Soliman, while fourth-seed seed Antonio Gabica, the 2006 Doha Asian games 9-ball gold winner and 8-ball silver medalist, will try to hurdle Jarry Pelayo in the double-elimination event.

Seeded fifth is Lee Van Corteza, who faces Richard Pornelosa while the No. 6 seed is Rodolfo Luat, who kicks off his bid against Manalo Tanasas.

After a successful but brief Euro tour this year, Marlon Manalo enters the tournament as its No. 7 seed and will meet Jimmy Cheng while eighth-seed Antonio Lining takes on the tournament's youngest qualifier, 14-year-old Johan Chua.

Seeded ninth is Jeffrey de Luna, whose wife will also be campaigning in the distaff side (see related story below). De Luna, the 2006 Asian Games silver medalist battles Rodrigo Geronimo. *Marlon Bernardino, Contributor*

Amit leads ladies' field

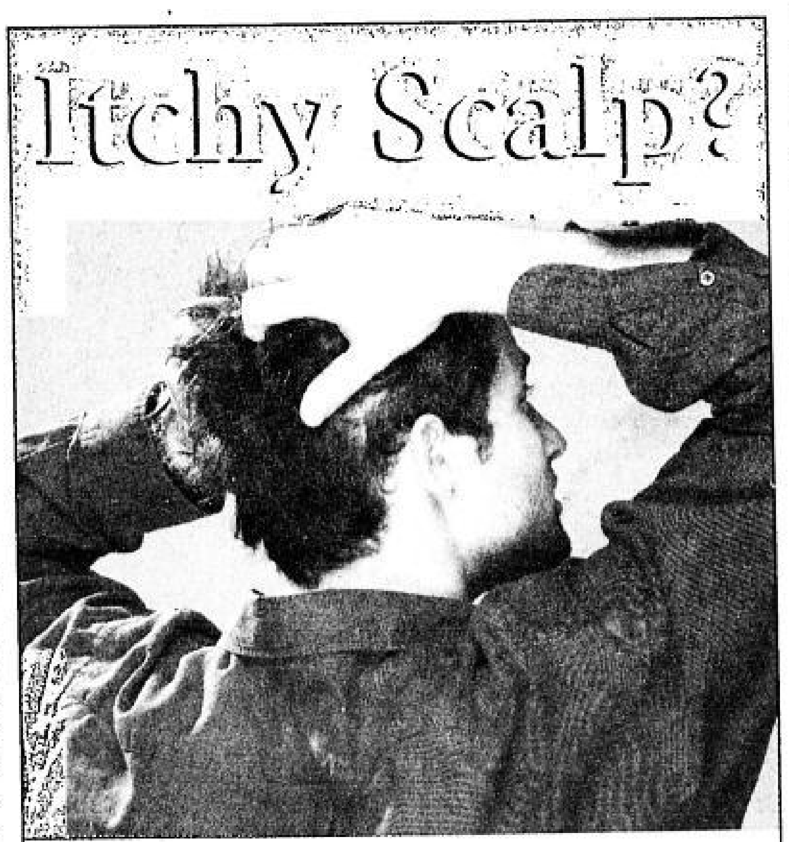
THE COUNTRY'S TOP female cue artists will try to grab some of the attention in the 1st BSCP National Pool Open at the Ninoy Aquino Stadium today.

Rubilen Amit, Iris Rañola and Mary-Ann Basas, the top three seeds in the P200,000-event, will try to avoid upsets as they hope to have a fruitful stint before they represent the country in the 2007 Amway Women's World Championship next month in Taiwan.

Amit, the 25-year-old Cebuana, faces unheralded Maria Mildred Almero.

"I still need to focus because just as I can beat my opponents, they can beat me too," said Amit in Filipino.

The 27-year-old Rañola battles veteran Johanna Dee while the 20-year-old Basas collides with Ian de Luna, wife of 2006 Doha Asian games silver medalist Jeffrey "The Bull" De Luna. *Marlon Bernardino, Contributor*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Ohio State, UCLA advance to Final 4

SAN ANTONIO—GREG ODEN WASN'T GOING to let foul trouble stop him, not with a chance to take Ohio State to the Final Four.

Frustrated by fouls for a third straight game, Oden made the most of his time on court during a key stretch of the second half, carrying the top-seeded Buckeyes past Memphis, 92-76, Saturday in the South Regional finals.

Oden's numbers weren't huge: 17 points, nine rebounds.

The 7-footer's impact was.

The Buckeyes (34-3) went from up five points to down five deficit during the 4:42 the fabulous freshman was on the bench after getting his third foul early in the second half. The moment he returned, everything changed. His presence on offense and defense sparked a 20-8 run that ultimately sent Ohio State to Atlanta for a showdown next weekend with the winner of the North Carolina-Georgetown game Sunday.

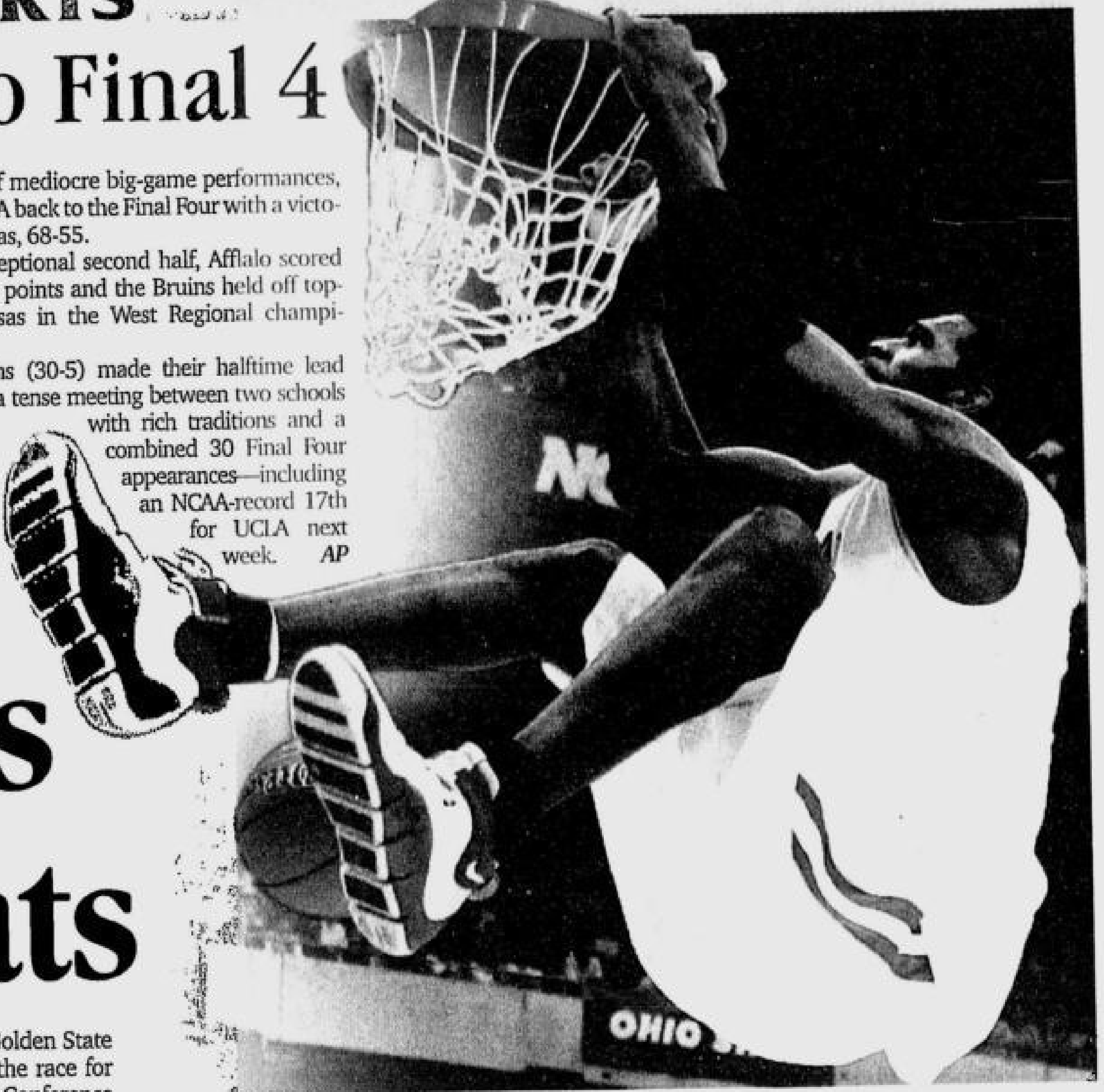
The Buckeyes last made the Final Four in 1999, when a team led by Michael Redd and Scoonie Penn lost to eventual national champion Connecticut. That trip later was expunged from the records because of NCAA violations, making their last official appearance in 1968.

Second-seeded Memphis (33-4) fell a game shy of the Final Four for a second straight season. The Conference USA champs were riding a 25-game winning streak and were plenty confident they could handle the Big Ten champs—and were doing just fine until the 260-pound future NBA lottery pick flexed his muscles.

In San Jose, California, Arron Afflalo erased his history of mediocre big-game performances, leading UCLA back to the Final Four with a victory over Kansas, 68-55.

In an exceptional second half, Afflalo scored 15 of his 24 points and the Bruins held off top-seeded Kansas in the West Regional championship.

The Bruins (30-5) made their halftime lead stand up in a tense meeting between two schools with rich traditions and a combined 30 Final Four appearances—including an NCAA-record 17th for UCLA next week. *AP*



OHIO State center Greg Oden applies the exclamation point to his team's victory. AP

Carter dunk lifts Nets over Bobcats

CHARLOTTE, NORTH CAROLINA—Vince Carter forced overtime with an acrobatic dunk at the buzzer, then took over in the extra period in a 40-point outing that led the New Jersey Nets to a 113-107 win over the undermanned Charlotte Bobcats on Saturday night.

Carter bailed out the Nets, who snapped a two-game losing streak and moved into a three-way tie for seventh place in the Eastern Conference with idle Orlando and Indiana.

With the Nets trailing by two in the closing seconds of regulation, Jason Kidd launched a desperation three-pointer from the left wing that was well short. Carter caught the air ball in front of the rim and in one motion dunked it behind his head as the horn sounded.

Josh Boone added a career-high 21 points and Richard Jefferson scored 16 for the Nets, who avoided an embarrassing loss to the severely short-handed Bobcats.

Matt Carroll matched his career high with 27 points and Walter Herrmann added a career-high 20 for Charlotte.

In Miami, Andre Iguodala scored 14 of his 19 points in the second half, Kyle Korver had 11 points in the final quarter and Philadelphia rallied from a 19-point hole to beat the struggling Heat, 93-85.

Iguodala, who was in the lineup after a sore back forced him to miss a game Friday with Charlotte and end a streak of 232 straight appearances, added seven rebounds and six assists for Philadelphia, which has won 10 of its last 14 to remain alive in the Eastern Conference playoff race.

Korver finished with 17 points.

Jason Williams scored 21 points with six assists and Shaquille O'Neal had 18 points for the Heat, who have lost three of their last four since their nine-game winning streak was snapped.

In Los Angeles, Corey Maggette scored nine of his 29 points in the final 77 seconds, Elton Brand added 18 points and 14 rebounds, and the Clippers stretched its winning streak to four games with a 111-105 triumph over the Wizards.

Chris Kaman had 17 points and nine rebounds for the Clippers, who extended their lead over the idle Golden State Warriors to a full-game in the race for the eighth and final Western Conference playoff spot. The Southeast Division leading Wizards stayed a half-game ahead of Miami, which lost to Philadelphia.

Gilbert Arenas, playing at Staples Center for the first time since scoring a franchise-record 60 points here against the Lakers in an overtime victory on Dec. 17, missed his first four shots and finished 9-for-25 from the field for 30 points.

In Salt Lake City, Carlos Boozer had 28 points and 15 rebounds as the Utah Jazz tripped the Memphis Grizzlies, 118-108.

Reserve Matt Harpring scored 24 points, and Deron Williams added 21 points and 13 assists to lead the Jazz, who have won five straight and 11 of 12 at home.

Andrei Kirilenko had 12 points and four blocks, and Paul Millsap added 11 points and 14 rebounds, helping the Jazz inch closer to clinching their first playoff berth since the 2002-03 season. *AP*

Korean pulls off surprise in world championships

MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA—PARK TAE-HWAN of South Korea pulled off an upset at the world swimming championships Sunday, coming from behind to knock off Australian favorite Grant Hackett in the 400-meter freestyle.

Park made a furious sprint over the final 50 meters, passing three swimmers—Hackett included—before he touched the wall in 3 minutes, 44.30 seconds to become South Korea's first world champion.

Park turned quickly look at the scoreboard, thrusting both fists in the air when seeing he had won.

Tunisia's Oussama Mellouli took the silver and Hackett held on for the bronze after barely qualifying for the final in the temporary pool at Rod Laver Arena. American Peter Vanderkaay, who put up the top time in the morning preliminaries, faded to fifth in the final.

The Australians had won the 400 free at every worlds since 1994. Hackett won at Montreal in 2005 after finishing second at the previous four championships, including three straight runner-up showings to now-retired countryman Ian Thorpe.

Hackett wasn't caught off guard by Park's performance. The South Korean had put up the second-best time of the season and held the Asian record in the 400. *AP*

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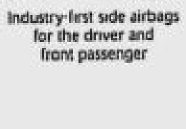

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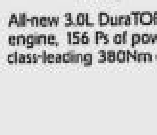

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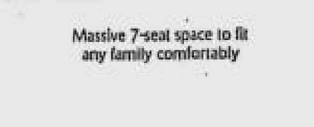

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MOTOROLA BINTAN GOLF

Murakami ties for seventh with 68

BINTAN, INDONESIA—ARTEMIO MURAKAMI shot a four-under-par 68 and secured his first Top 10 finish as a pro by tying for seventh place in the inaugural Motorola International Bintan golf tournament won by American Jason Knutzon Sunday.

The 23-year-old Murakami, who ruled the 36-hole Omega Cup at Wack Wack early this month, wound up with a nine-under 279 total to tie Airil Rizman Zahari of Malaysia after earlier rounds of 72-68-71.

A former RP amateur champion who turned pro along with Juvic Pagunsan last year, Murakami highlighted his final 35-33 trip on the Ria Bintan Golf Club course on the holiday island of Bintan with an eagle on the par 5 16th hole.

He could have finished a notch higher but he bogeyed the 17th, which was the lone blemish to his explosive last round that included birdies on the first, 10th and 12th holes.

Angelo Que, who served as Filipino spearhead in the first two rounds, faded to a 73 and wound up tied with Pagunsan, who rallied with a 69, at four-under 284.

Gerald Rosales also finished with a 73 for 286 while Antonio Lascuña wound up among the tailenders with a 77 for 294.

Knutzon, two shots off the lead going into the last day, put on a master-class performance with six birdies for a four-day total of 14-under-par 274 and earned $55,475.

It was his second victory on the Asian Tour since his maiden triumph in the Macau Open in 2004.

Peter Fowler of Australia, who turns 48 this year, rolled back the years and produced a vintage performance with a 67 to finish second at 275.

Unho Park of Australia, grabbed third place after a 68 to finish two behind the winner while Chinese Taipei's Lu Wen-teh was fourth, a further stroke back after a 69. Overnight leader Rick Gibson of Canada shared fifth place with Australian Scott Barr on 278.

"The first time is always special. But today was unbelievable," said Knutzon, who moved up to 15th place on the Asian Tour's UBS Order of Merit. "I played pretty good, putted great and was real steady with no bogeys. It's just a great feeling to win again.

"My start of the year hasn't been great, I missed four straight cuts by one stroke, and I said it just feels good to make the cut." *Asian Tour News*

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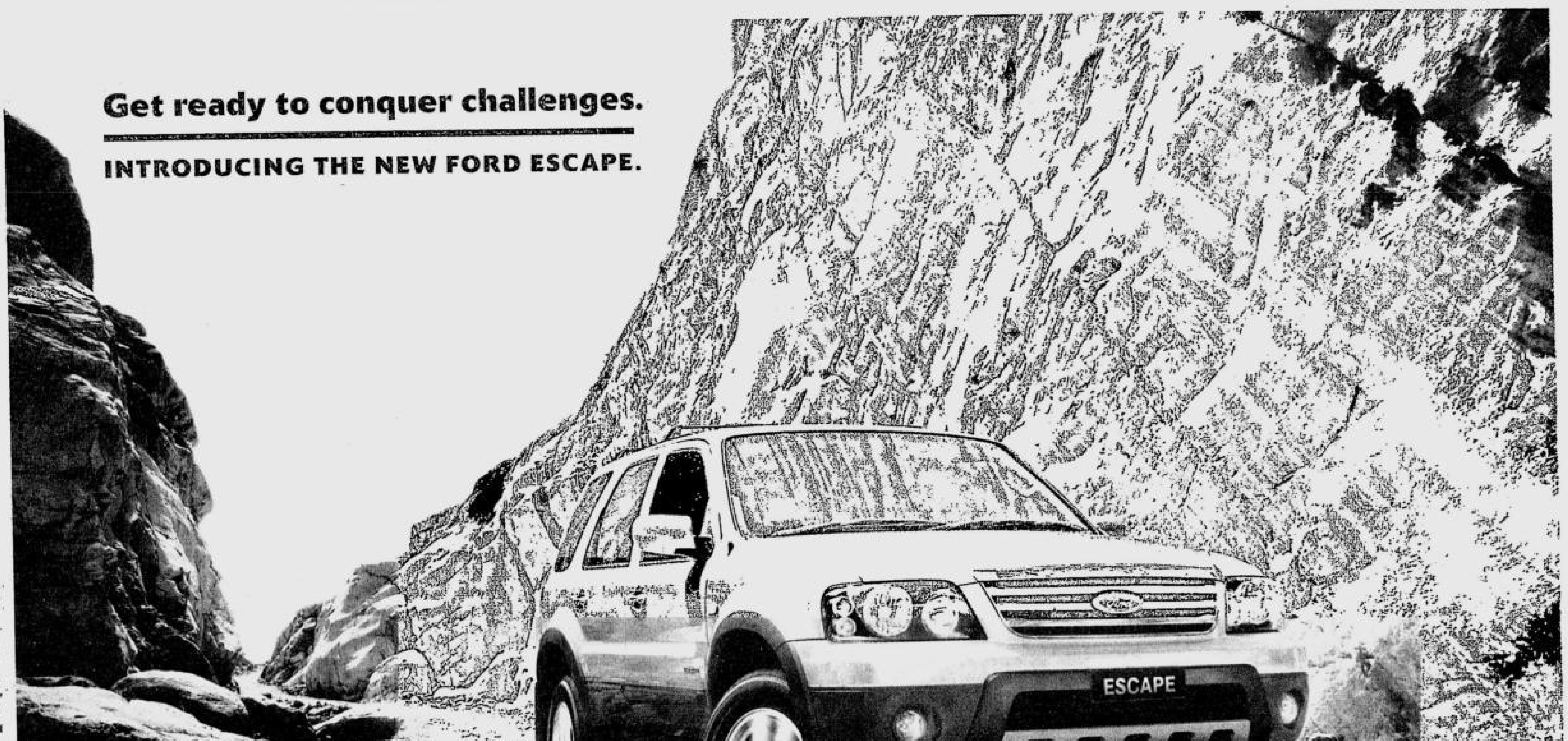

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Bautista, Banal fly to LA today

REY "BOOM BOOM" BAUTISTA AND ALEX John Banal, who will see action in the undercard of the May 5 Oscar De La Hoya-Floyd Mayweather Jr. title clash in Las Vegas, are set to leave for the US today to continue their training at the Wild Card gym in Los Angeles.

The two undefeated ALA boys will be accompanied by trainer Edito Villamor, who will supervise their week-long training in LA before the three proceed to Puerto Rico to join noted US trainer Freddie Roach, who is preparing De La Hoya for his monumental showdown with Mayweather.

Bautista will take on undefeated Argentinian Sergio Manuel Medina in a 12-round eliminator for the World Boxing Organization super bantamweight crown.

The winner moves on to challenge reigning champion Daniel Ponce De Leon, who kept his title after a disputed unanimous decision over Filipino Gerry Peñalosa.

Banal, meanwhile, will take on a soon-to-be-announced foe in the card billed as "The World Awaits" for his American debut.

Before leaving, Bautista and Villamor received separate awards at the Elorde Annual Banquet of Champions in Parañaque last night. *Salven L. Lagumbay, contributor*

Pacquiao still PPV 'king'

FILIPINO SUPERSTAR MANNY PACquiao remains the king of pay-per-view in the lighter weight division of world boxing.

The only bigger pay-per-view attraction is Oscar De La Hoya who fights in the bigger light middleweight class.

According to the figures released by HBO PPV recently, the Marco Antonio Barrera-Juan Manuel Marquez World Boxing Council super featherweight title fight on March 17 generated only 225,000 pay-per-view buys and $10.1 million in television revenue.

HBO expects the total number to rise after all cable system numbers come in and are tabulated, but it is doubted whether the figures would be a record.

In contrast, the third bout between Pacquiao and Morales for the WBC International super featherweight crown last November generated 350,000 buys, which is much higher than the Marquez-Barrera tiff.

Even the second Pacquiao-Morales rumble early last year generated the same 350,000 buys, while their initial encounter chalked up a slightly lower figure at 340,000 buys.

While he is ranged against a virtually unknown fighter in Jorge Solis on April 14, industry sources believe that Pacquiao can still deliver the figures enough to upstage the Barrera-Marquez bout.

Sources, however, believe that Pacquiao would have been better off being promoted by Golden Boy Promotions, which owns the promotional rights over fighters who could have given Pacquiao the meaningful fights he needs, as well as possible pay-per-view matchups that would have easily rival the figures he chalked up against Morales.

Salven L. Lagumbay, contributor

PCU faces sanctions

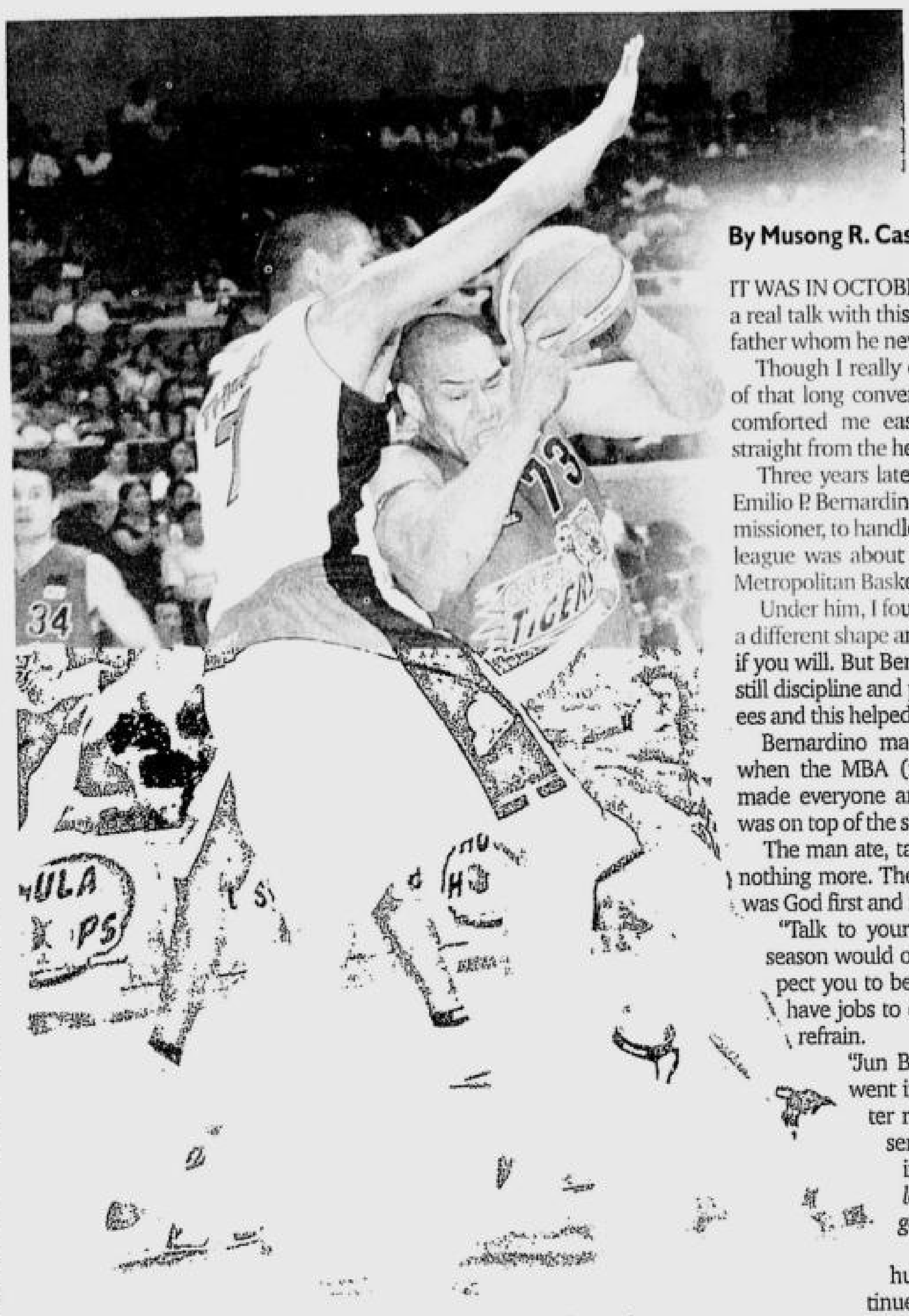
By Marc Anthony Reyes

PHILIPPINE CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY COULD forfeit all its games last season and lose the NCAA general championship trophy if found guilty of committing irregularities in the last season.

"Unless PCU is able to point to somebody who is responsible for the irregularities, there could be forfeitures and they could be stripped of the general championship," NCAA former management committee chair Henry Atayde told the INQUIRER yesterday.

But Atayde, who is heading the investigation, said PCU would be informed first of the result of the Mancom probe before any action is taken. He added that PCU has also to conclude its own probe and come up with corrective measures if any.

Atayde also clarified that suspension is a penalty not clearly defined in the league's rules.



THE PBA honored Jun Bernardino with a moment of silence last night, right after the game between Sonny Thoss' (left) Alaska and Ali Peek's Coca-Cola. *Game result on A23.* AUGUST DELA CRUZ

'It's like losing a second father'

By Musong R. Castillo

IT WAS IN OCTOBER 1995 WHEN I FIRST HAD a real talk with this man during the wake for my father whom he never really knew.

Though I really cannot recall the exact words of that long conversation, whatever he told me comforted me easily enough since he talked straight from the heart.

Three years later, I found myself working for Emilio P. Bernardino Jr., the well-loved PBA commissioner, to handle the PBA's media affairs as the league was about to cross paths then with the Metropolitan Basketball Association.

Under him, I found my father again, though in a different shape and form and in a less stern way if you will. But Bernardino also knew how to instill discipline and professionalism in his employees and this helped make the PBA tick.

Bernardino made the PBA a better league when the MBA (now defunct) was there. He made everyone around him better because he was on top of the situation.

The man ate, talked and breathed basketball, nothing more. The only things that meant more was God first and family next.

"Talk to your families, because the (new) season would open soon. Tell them not to expect you to be home that much because we have jobs to do," was Bernardino's familiar refrain.

"Jun B" loved to eat, that's why he went into the restaurant business after retiring in 2003. He never had serious vices after he quit smoking in 2000, except *crispy pata, lechon kawali, kare-kare, bagoong,* etc.

"That man is scared of going hungry," Rickie Santos, who continues to be with the PBA Commissioner's office, kept reminding me in jest then because of the ton of food Jun B would order for staff meetings.

But some of the food was intended for his rank-and-file employees whom he cared for the same way he did his staff.

"My compassion is limitless," he told me once. "I won't be happy if the person sitting next to me is not. Be compassionate in life and you won't go wrong."

Jun B never really had a serious illness before the first heart attack in Baguio in 2001, when he had difficulty breathing because he thought "that the air going up was thinning."

The occasional attack of gout was the only thing that slowed him down in doing his duties. But even with a noticeable limp, that didn't stop him from helping people in and out of the PBA even if he had to go out of his way.

I was the first non-family member to see him at the Capitol Medical Center the day after his first heart attack. While holding my hand and tears streaming down his cheeks, he said:

"Pare, masama itong tumama sa akin, huwag niyong pababayaan ang trabaho niyo sa opisina, ha. (What happened to me was bad, don't forget to do your jobs well)"

He looked so helpless. His entire body was cramping up because the doctors had flushed the potassium out of his system, yet the only thing he could think of was the league he helped nurture.

Bernardino got back to work after a year, but not in the same tireless fashion that he used to show since the early 1980s.

Another heart attack followed in 2004 and he finally succumbed after the third at the Manila Polo Club on Friday night.

I had the pleasure of interviewing him for the last time Wednesday night.

"I'm still here because of God's grace," he said. "As long as He still wants me around, I'm not keeping still."

Even then, "Kume" talked straight from the heart. But God wants him up there now. Losing a father once was hard enough. Now I have lost two in my lifetime. And I will forever remember the man whose heart was bigger than his body.

SPORTSWATCH

Lyceum Pirates to conduct tryouts

LYCEUM OF THE PHILIPPINES WILL HOLD TRYOUTS FOR ITS MEN'S BASketball team starting Wednesday, March 28, to Saturday, March 31, at the Lyceum gym in Intramuros, Manila. The tryouts will be held form 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Interested players must be 24 years old and below. Fresh high school graduates are also welcomed to join. Those who will make it to the team will have the chance to play in the coming Nike Summer League. Among the well-known Lyceum players include Gary David of Air21 and former slam dunk king Joey Mente. For inquiries, call Lyceum athletics office (5257669) or call/text coach Bonnie Tan (0922-8847223). Aside from Tan, the other members of the Lyceum coaching staff are Senen Duenas, Nandy Garcia, and Analyn Ayab. Athletic director is Tanny Gonzales.

BEST holds Laguna, Capiz classes

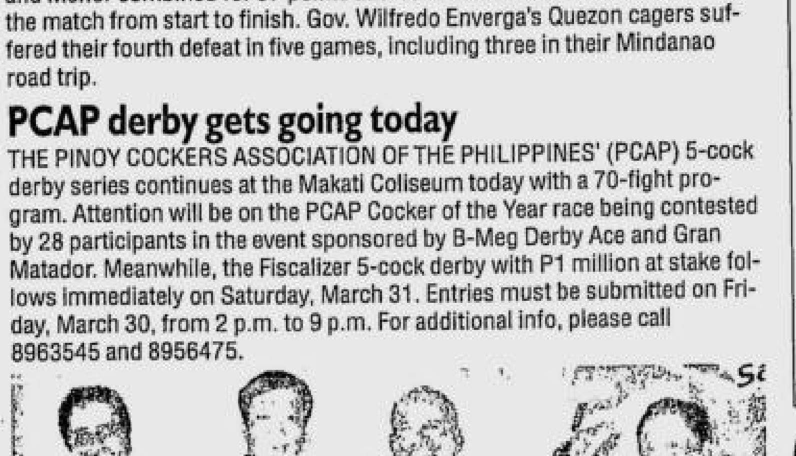
BEST CENTER, BACKED BY MILO, HAS SCHEDULED PROVINCIAL SUMMER clinics in addition to its Metro Manila sessions. Classes will be held at the Jesus the Risen Savior School at 4 Sampaguita Avenue, Sampaguita Village, San Pedro, Laguna, and at the Capiz gym, Villareal stadium in Roxas City. Level 1 sessions will be offered at San Pedro. Contact persons in San Pedro, Laguna, are Lyn Isip or Rene Rasco (4202301/23). For Roxas City, interested parties may contact Ronnie Begala and David Recio (0910-3758398) and 0920-9103729. BEST Center clinics in Metro Manila are scheduled to kick off on April 9. Registration is in full swing.

Pacman scores first NBC win

DAVAO CITY—MP PACMAN-GENSAN GOT BACK AT OPENING-DAY TORmentor Quezon Villa Anita, 89-76, Saturday for its first win in the 2007 NBC National Cup basketball tournament at the Almendaras gym here. The Warriors of boxing icon Manny Pacquiao rode on the deadly inside game of Jeffrey Locsin and Rolly Menor to avenge their 64-71 loss to Quezon. Locsin and Menor combined for 37 points and 18 rebounds as Gensan dominated the match from start to finish. Gov. Wilfredo Enverga's Quezon cagers suffered their fourth defeat in five games, including three in their Mindanao road trip.

PCAP derby gets going today

THE PINOY COCKERS ASSOCIATION OF THE PHILIPPINES' (PCAP) 5-cock derby series continues at the Makati Coliseum today with a 70-fight program. Attention will be on the PCAP Cocker of the Year race being contested by 28 participants in the event sponsored by B-Meg Derby Ace and Gran Matador. Meanwhile, the Fiscalizer 5-cock derby with P1 million at stake follows immediately on Saturday, March 31. Entries must be submitted on Friday, March 30, from 2 p.m. to 9 p.m. For additional info, please call 8963545 and 8956475.



CHAMPION: Gen. Clyde Fernandez (second from left) accepts the trophy from Federation of Philippine Amateur Senior Golfers Inc. president Ducky Paredes after Team Aguinaldo ruled the overall championship in the 2007 San Mig Coffee Sugar Free first leg at the East Ridge Golf Club last week. Joining them are Eastridge president Dr. Antonio Rivera and secretary Romeo Cabungcal.

Tribute, belated apology to Jun B, our coach

BARE EYE

Recah Trinidad

IBOK, JUN BERNARDINO, OR SIMPLY JUN B to basketball lovers, was not a frontrunner when they started deliberating on who would succeed Rey Marquez as PBA commissioner in 1994.

Maybe there were others with more impressive credentials. Naturally, PBA founders, whether they liked it or not, had to take a gamble in picking Bernardino.

Little did they know it was the best wager they would ever make for the pro league.

Jun B did not only guide the PBA to some of its finest seasons.

He also steered the league out of severe crises, with no noticeable cry or creak.

Even before his passing at age 59 the other day, Bernardino was already a hands-down choice as one of the three most outstanding commissioners the PBA ever had.

***

Now they call this mild-mannered manager a man with a golden heart—an understatement.

A born fighter, Jun B had a unique way of playing hard in order to win.

But his best and worst trait was that he did not seem to know what moderation or temperance was when it came to his basketball mission. He was a tireless worker, with a consuming passion, who gave his all until the heart literally could no longer take it.

As a result, the entire PBA, fans included, should continue to wear an invisible black arm band past the current conference, in memory of Jun B's dedication and greatness.

***

The late Danny Floro of the Crispa Redmanizers, the main man behind the first PBA grand slam, was the Dr. Yes of Philippine basketball.

But Bernardino himself did not know how to say no when it came to basketball.

He should hold the distinction of never having turned down a basketball job, no matter how daunting.

Being the longest-serving PBA commissioner, Jun B was at the forefront—top backer and resident worrier—of three RP Asian Games basketball expeditions to the Hiroshima (1994), Bangkok (1998) and Busan (2002) tournaments.

This reporter had felt how he would die a little with each failed campaign.

The most savage blow, of course, came in the Busan Asiad semifinal match against South Korea, which RP lost only after an incredible triple by an invisible Sokor sniper in the final seconds.

***

It was too much for any man to take.

Jun B must've been crushed, but he grimly kept his poise.

This would not be the case with his son, who broke down, crying, "No, this is not true, this cannot be."

A victory and a dream Asiad finals meeting with powerhouse China would've been a culmination of lifelong dedication and sacrifices.

Jun B kept all the hurt to himself.

***

Says Sta. Lucia governor Buddy Encarnado: "He took the blame, bore the brunt of criticism rather than see the governors at odds and divided. I can't forget his diplomacy in trying to make PBA stronger and bigger."

He rolled with the punches after he was hit hard for bringing in Fil-Am players.

Finally, Jun B had to officially retire after having served longest as PBA commissioner.

But did he ever give his overworked heart a rest?

The last and final time we saw each other, he gave me a warm hug.

His eyes were moist. This was during the basketball unity congress at the Dusit Hotel, moments after it was officially announced the Philippines would next be restored by the international basketball federation (Fiba) to its world roster.

You could see Ibok was the happiest man in the world.

He had cried and suffered quietly for RP basketball in the years it had been suspended from international competition.

***

Yes, there would have been a celebration if his impending appointment as executive director of the new national basketball body, Samahang Basketball ng Pilipinas, had materialized.

Well, maybe this need not be mentioned here.

Your reporter, at one time, ended up wearing Jun B's playing shoes during an impromptu workout at the Rizal Memorial of the Sports Scribes, the team composed of sportswriters for the National Press Club Inter-Beat league.

The shoes, sad to say, would not fit.

They were my size, but they were uneven and well-worn, by a dedicated fellow who would dig truly hard at both ends of the court.

The problem with Ibok was that he had sincerely thought us sportswriters would do our basketball as hard and seriously as he would.

He entertained the obscene notion he could squeeze good, decent basketball out of creaky, beer-powered limbs.

He could not say no. He paid for it.

Sorry, coach.

Tambogon, Torres rule Int'l Pairs Eagle leg

JAN COUP TAMBOGON AND KARLYN KHAYE Torres combined for a best-ball 48 points to top the first qualifying leg of the Lufthansa International Pairs, pulling away at the Faldo course of the Eagle Ridge Golf and Country Club in Gen. Trias, Cavite.

Tambogon, carrying a handicap of four, and 20-handicapper Torres made two eagles, 9 birdies against a bogey for a net 12-under-par score of 60 that set them apart from the rest of the 30-team cast in the tourney presented by Callaway.

They won by five over the pairs of Stephen Albano-Peony Nepomuceno with Norman Tugot-Ramil Villanueva claiming third place.

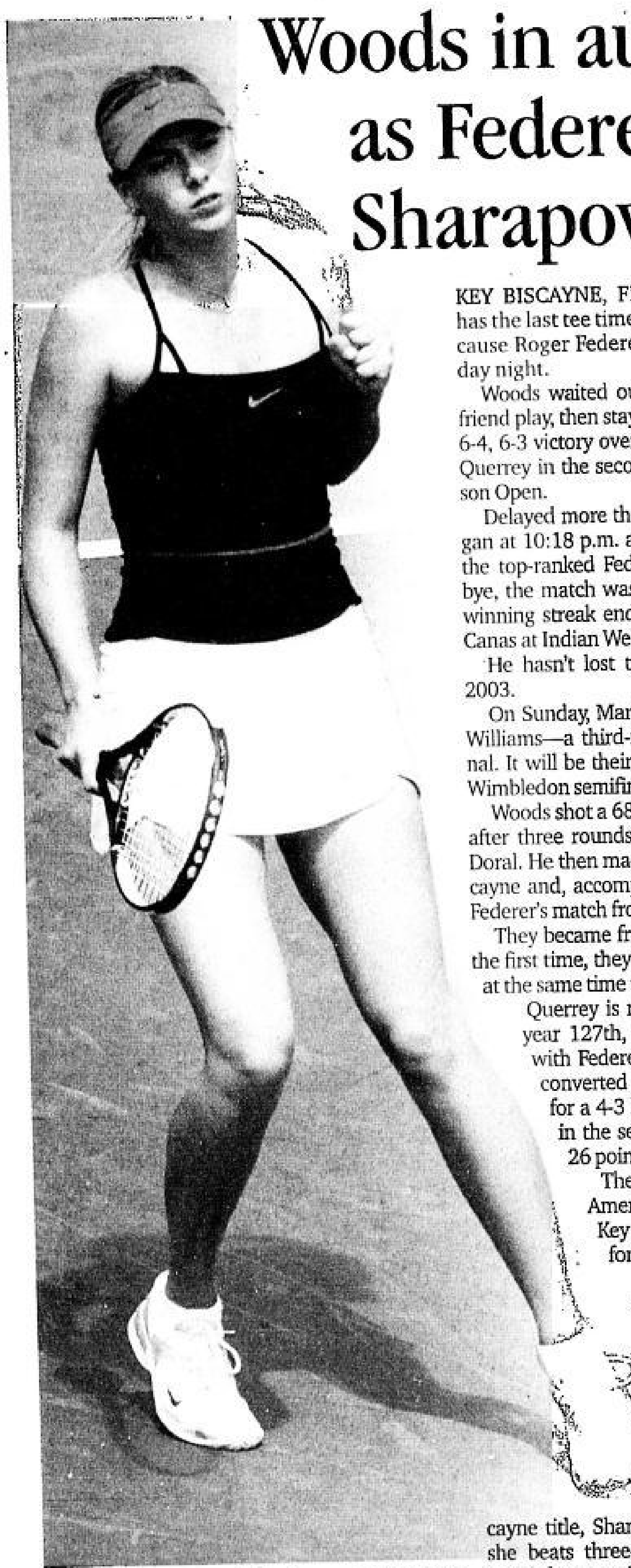
The two teams will be the first and second alternates just in case Tambogon and Torres become unavailable to represent Eagle Ridge in the national finals on May 29.

In the Philippine finals, club qualifiers will dispute an all-expense paid trip to the home of golf in St. Andrews, Scotland where they will represent the country in the world championships of the International Pairs against 30 other nations.

All is not lost, however, for the other Eagle Ridge entries. They will be eligible for the many other prizes, including another ticket to St. Andrews, Callaway products and holiday packages worth more than P500,000 to be raffled off.

Up next is the Iloilo Golf and Country Club leg on April 14 which is part of the club's centennial celebrations. Also scheduled are qualifiers in Alabang (April 21), Canlubang (April 28), Wack Wack (May 5) and Royal Northwoods (May 5).

Interested participants can call their respective clubs for schedules or Primeline Events Management at 8342444.



MARIA Sharapova celebrates a point against point Chan Yung-jan of Taiwan. AP

Woods in audience as Federer wins; Sharapova gains

KEY BISCAYNE, FLORIDA—TIGER WOODS has the last tee time Sunday, which is good because Roger Federer kept him out late Saturday night.

Woods waited out a rainstorm to watch his friend play, then stayed until the end of Federer's 6-4, 6-3 victory over 19-year-old American Sam Querrey in the second round of the Sony Ericsson Open.

Delayed more than two hours, the match began at 10:18 p.m. and ended at 11:20. Because the top-ranked Federer had an opening-round bye, the match was his first since his 41-match winning streak ended with a loss to Guillermo Canas at Indian Wells on March 11.

He hasn't lost two matches in a row since 2003.

On Sunday, Maria Sharapova will play Venus Williams—a third-round match worthy of a final. It will be their first meeting since the 2005 Wimbledon semifinals.

Woods shot a 68 Saturday for a four-shot lead after three rounds at the CA Championship at Doral. He then made the 15-mile trip to Key Biscayne and, accompanied by wife Elin, watched Federer's match from the stadium club level.

They became friends in the past year, and for the first time, they're competing in the same city at the same time this weekend.

Querrey is ranked 69th after starting the year 127th, but he managed to keep up with Federer for only six games. Federer converted his sixth break-point chance for a 4-3 lead, broke again to go up 3-2 in the second set and lost only one of 26 points on his first serve.

The win was his 33rd in a row over Americans and his 13th in a row at Key Biscayne, where he's bidding for his third successive title.

The top-seeded Sharapova advanced by beating Chan Yung-jan 6-3, 6-2 in her opening match. The unseeded Williams endured two rain delays in the second set totaling 5½ hours before she eliminated No. 29 Maria Kirilenko, 6-3, 6-3.

Seeking her first Key Biscayne title, Sharapova faces a difficult draw. If she beats three-time champion Williams, she could face another three-time winner—Serena Williams—in the next round. *AP*

Tiger pulls away

MIAMI—TIGER WOODS SET THE tone early with a 4-iron that cut through the stiff wind and landed 10 feet away for eagle. He kept everyone at a distance Saturday by avoiding calamity on the Blue Monster's brutal closing hole.

And when the third round ended, it looked as though no one had a spitting chance.

With only one mistake on a windy day filled with them, Woods shot 4-under 68 and stretched his lead to four shots in the CA Championship, leaving him poised to capture his third straight title at Doral and send him to the US Masters on a high.

About the only intrigue came from Sergio Garcia.

Disgusted by missing yet another short putt, the 27-year-old Spaniard tapped in for a three-putt bogey and then spit into the cup. Garcia didn't deny this lapse in etiquette, only its effect on the guys playing behind him.

"I just missed the putt and I wasn't too happy," Garcia said. "Don't worry. It did go in the middle (of the cup) and wasn't going to affect anyone else. If it did, I would have wiped it off."

WOODS REUTERS

Asked about the incident after the TV interview, he snapped, "I just said it. I'm not going to repeat it."

Garcia wound up with a 71 and was seven shots behind, but he had plenty of company.

Woods again wiped out the field with superb shots and by making enough putts to reach 11-under 205. He is 38-3 on the US tour with at least a share of the 54-hole lead, and he has never lost when leading by more than one.

Brett Wetterich had a 67 and will play in the final group Sunday.

Along with owning Doral, Woods has won this World Golf Championship the last two years (in San Francisco and London), and five out of seven times. He will be trying to win his 13th WGC event since the series began in 1999.

"If you're leading, usually you're playing halfway decent," Woods said. "Hopefully, tomorrow I can handle my business."

Nick O'Hern, who ended Woods' seven-tournament winning streak on the PGA Tour by beating him in the Accenture Match Play Championship a month ago, played bogey-free for a 66 and was another shot behind at 6-under 210.

Ernie Els got to within one shot of the lead midway through the round until he quit making birdies, then took double bogey on the 18th hole that started with an errant drive and ended with a bunker shot that went over the green. He had to settle for a 71.

Els was in the group at 211 that included Vijay Singh (69), Thomas Bjorn (71), Aaron Baddeley (71) and Charles Howell III, whose bogey on the final hole ruined a spirited rally and left him with a 71. *AP*

SAFEWAY INTERNATIONAL

Ochoa four up; Rosales fights back

SUPERSTITION MOUNTAIN, ARIZONA—Mexico's Lorena Ochoa fired a 3-under 69 here Saturday to take a four-shot lead into the final round of the $1.5-million LPGA Safeway International.

The 25-year-old 2006 Player of the Year had a 54-hole total of 14-under 202, and was four strokes in front of South Korean Jeong Jang (68) and Norway's Suzann Pettersen (69).

After surviving the halfway cut on the bubble, Filipino Jennifer Rosales rallied with a 68 to join a six-way tie for 25th place at 215. Rosales started with rounds of 77-70.

But Dorothy Delasin failed to advance after scoring 77-71.

Following two days of stormy weather, Ochoa returned from an overnight suspension to complete four holes of a second-round 64—the lowest round of the tournament—on Saturday morning.

OCHOA

While she couldn't find the same form on the greens in the aftgernoon, she did make birdies at the first, fourth and 18th holes in a bogey-free third round.

"It has been a long day but a really good one," Ochoa said. "I set up a lot of chances this afternoon but couldn't make many putts. Hopefully, they will all fall tomorrow."

A six-time winner in 2006, Ochoa has two top-10 finishes in three starts this season.

Jang was all over the course early, posting three birdies and two bogeys on her first five holes. She settled down thereafter, carding three birdies with no bogeys the rest of the way.

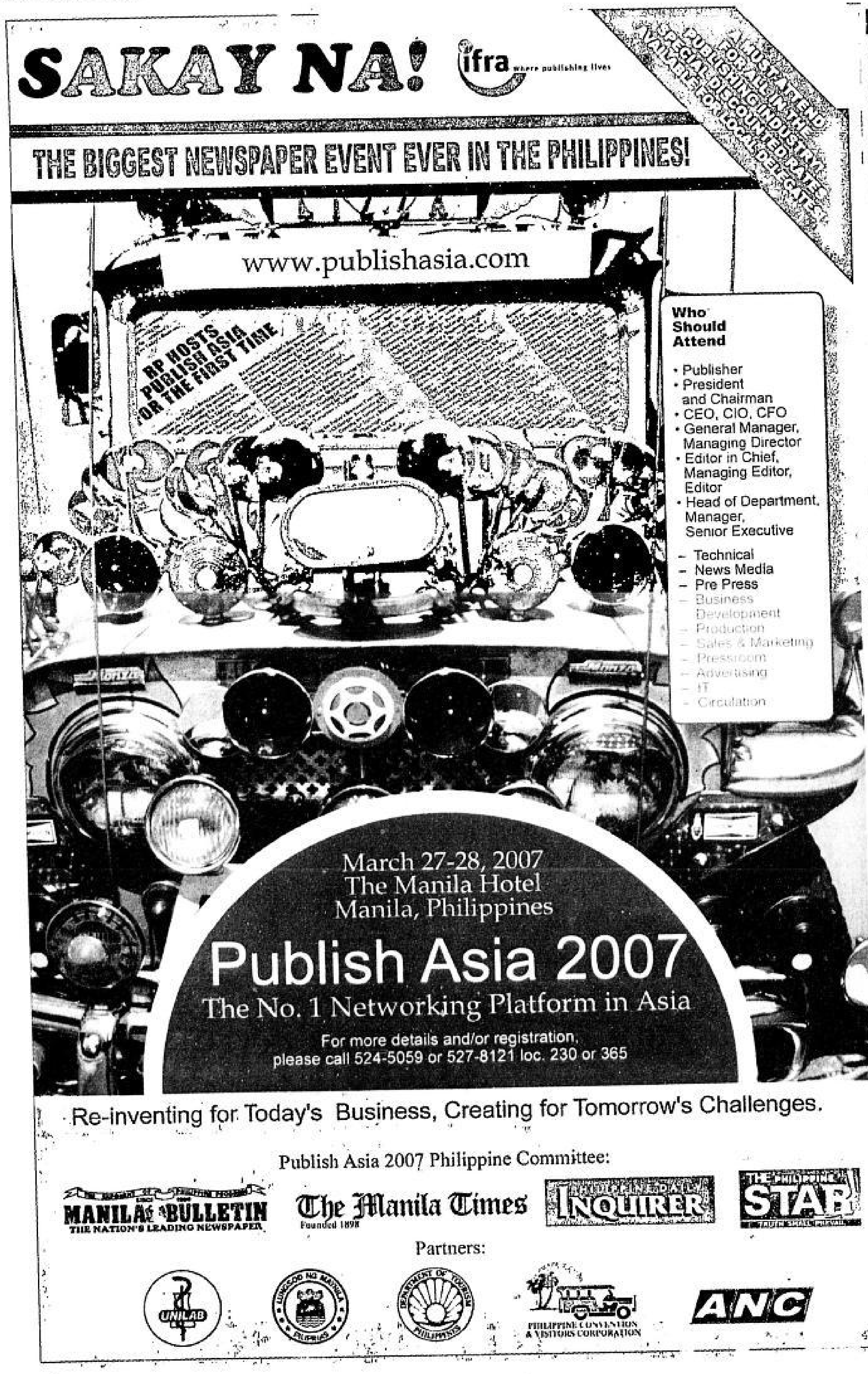
Pettersen, who won the French Women's Open in her first season as a pro, also had an eventful day. After playing a bogey-free round Friday, she signed a card that had eight birdies and five bogeys, including one on No. 17.

"It's never fun to start with a bogey in the middle of the fairway," Pettersen said.

Pettersen was the 2001 Rookie of the Year on the Ladies' European Tour but has been plagued by injuries during her four years in the US.

Britain's Catriona Matthew slipped into a tie for fifth after an erratic 2-over 74 that included a three-putt bogey at the last hole.

World No. 1 Annika Sorenstam birdied the final two holes for a 69 and was alongside Matthew, eight strokes behind Ochoa. *AFP*



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Conference Programme

Tuesday, 27 March 2007
Welcome Address
Attorney Miguel Varela President of ManilaBulletin and Chairman Emeritus of the PhilippineChamber of Commerce and Industries, Philippines Reiner Mittelbach, CEO, Ifra, Germany
Keynote Presentation:Reinventing for Today's Business, Creating for Tomorrow's Challenges
•The monumental challenges facing the newspaper industry today
•Harnessing new technology to re-invent and re-structure
•Continuing to ensure high ethical standards and commitment to quality
Murdoch MacLennan, CEO, Telegraph Media Group, United Kingdom
Networking Break, Expo Visit
Session 1 Business and Strategy
Moderator : David O Valdes, Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer, Philippine Daily Inquirer,Philippines
A Strategy for Integration
•Synergies through coordination and cooperation of business areas•Cross promotional efforts
•Digital strategy: exploiting potential niches via community publications
David O. Valdes, Executive Vice President andChief Operating Officer, Philippine Daily Inquirer,Philippines
Parallel Session 1
Semi-Commercial Printing
Entering the Semi-Commercial Market
•Retro fitting presses
•Practical insights
Moderator: *Manfred Werfel, Research Director and Deputy CEO, Ifra, Germany*
An interactive panel discussion with the publishing community comprising of publishers, industry vendors end end users will be held at the end of the session.
Investment Models - CASH daily
•How the next generation of customers are presenting the media industry with new challenges
•First results after launching a world-premiere cross-media product
•'CASH daily', the information platform for those interested in business.
Thomas Trueb, Member of the Group Management,Ringier, Switzerland
Lunch, Expo Visit
Strategy for Staying Ahead; Product Diversification
•Why it makes sense to widen your portfolio of products
•Attracting new audiences
•Functioning business models
Siddharth Kothari, Director, Rajasthan Patrika, India
Parallel Session 2
Distribution Realities of Asia
Overview of challenges for Distribution and Circulation Management
•What are the options to address these challenges
•How can newspaper industry collectively accelerate transition from where they are today to where they should be
Case study - Magic of Beer Distribution
Panel discussion of Circulation and Distribution
Moderator: *Cyril Pereira, Principal, Telesis Consulting Limited,Hong Kong*
A Strategy for Integrated Newsrooms
•Why publishers need to integrate•The challenges to overcome
•The convergence project at The Daily Telegraph
Dr. Dietmar Schantin, Director of Newsplex, Ifra, Germany
Networking Break, Expo Visit
Session 2 Digital Media
Launching a Community Site
•How to develop and market community sites
•Managing communities
•Creating synergies among other news channels
Chew V. Ming, Executive Content Producer,STOMP, Singapore Press Holdings, Singapore
Parallel Session 3
Change Management in the Newsroom
•The situation of change and re-organisation in newsrooms today
•How the success of re-organisation depends on good change management
•Examples of best practice and worst practice of change management in the newsroom
•Methods and tips to help increase acceptance of change
Sarah Schantin Williams, Associate Consultant,Ifra Newsplex, Germany
Search Engines Strategies for Newspapers
•New commercial and editorial arenas opened by search for an online news organization
•What search engines can tell you about your own site and your own readers
•Search engine optimization
Jo Christian Oterhals, Head of Development,VG Multimedia, Norway
Mobile Publishing
•"Made for Mobile" content: How the mobile customer is seeking exclusive differentiated content on his handset
•Moving from a product-centric thought process to a consumer-centric thought process
•Looking through the prism of a newspaper-driven media house
Saurav Sen, Head of Business - Telecoms &Internet, ABP Pvt Ltd, India
Closing Comments of first day
Welcome Dinner
Wednesday, 28 March 2007
Moderator: Jim Chisholm, Joint Principal, iMedia, France
Session 3 Advertising Strategies
Building Across Media Advertising Strategies
•How to structure sales strategy
•Developing packages
•Classifieds strategy
Jim Chisholm Joint Principal, iMedia, France
Parallel Session 1
Workflow Management -Production, Editorial, Advertising
•Reducing the cost of operations
•Minimizing manpower
•Reducing time to press
•Facilitating the entire operation with integrated solutions
Moderator: *Manfred Werfel, Research Director and DeputyCEO, Ifra, Germany*
An interactive panel discussion with the publishing community comprising of publishers, industry vendors and end users will be held at the end of the session.
Multi-Media Sales Model
•How to create successful sales teams
•Print/online classified strategies
•How to reward staff
Robert C. Granfeldt, Vice President Consulting Morris DigitalWorks, USA
The Google Economy
•How publishers can partner with Google to generate new revenue streams
Speaker to be confirmed
Networking Break, Expo Visit
Online Classifieds- Speurders.nl
•Launching an online classifieds site in a highly competitive market
•Practical steps on how to develop a site
•Challenges for the future
Leon Kramer, Marketing Manager, Speurders.nl,The Netherlands
Panel Discussion:Competing for the Advertisers' Budget
•At a time when advertiser across the world are reviewing their marketing strategies, shifting revenues from traditional media and developing new strategies for attracting and retaining consumers, this session examines the views of key decision makers in marketing and outlines how you can increase your share of the advertisers' budget.
Speakers to be confirmed
Lunch, Expo Visit
Session 4 Circulation, Readership and Audience
Sessions hosted by **Inma**
The Brand Positioning of The Times of India
•Applying brand management principles to aproduct portfolio
•Capitalizing on a growth market to win market share
Ravi Dhariwal, Executive Director, The Times ofIndia, India
Parallel Session 2
Waste Management
•Key performance indicators for newspapers
•What should be measured and what results can be achieved
Speaker to be confirmed
Networking Break, Expo Visit
Strategy Development of Korea SportsNewpapers - IS
•How IS (sister newspaper of JoongAng Ilbo) worked out operational and restructuring strategies
•Pursued differentiation strategies
Changhee Park, Director/Strategic PlanningOffice, JoongAng Ilbo, Seoul, South Korea
Eyeballs and Audiences: Ideas and TrendsWorldwide
•Tap into the unique "INMA Conversation"worldwide and learn about the best ideas to grow newspaper circulation, readership and audience
•Harvest the best examples of product, price and promotion in this global tour de force presentation
Earl J. Wilkinson, Executive Director, INMA, USA
Closing Summary of the Conference
Asia Media Awards Gala Dinner

Event Activities

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Back by popular requests; take fulladvantage of the Publish Asia 2007 Golf Tournament to network with industry leaders head at one of the finest golf courses in Manila on March 29, Thursday.

A Welcome Dinner reception will be hosted by Manila Bulletin on the evening of Tuesday 27 March from 18:00hrs onwards. All delegates are invited for a guided plant tour at Manila Bulletin on the same evening.

On Wednesday, 28 March, The Philippine Department of Tourism and the Philippine Convention and Visitors Corporation hosts a Philippine Cocktails at the Puerta Real in the Old Walled City of Manila, featuring cultural and folk presentations.

The 6th Annual Asia Media Awards Gala Dinner will also be on **Wednesday, 28 March** at the closing finale of the event. All the evening functions require RSVP. More information will be made available on www.publishasia.com

Please note: Ifra Asia reserves the right to alter the program as necessary. Information provided as accurate as possible at the time of printing Please check www.publishasia.com for regular program updates

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Harbour-RP five to focus on zone, running game

By Jasmine W. Payo

LOOK BEYOND THE WESTERN STYLE of play.

This was the challenge posed by coach Junel Baculi to the young Harbour Centre-Philippines team set to compete in the Southeast Asian Basketball Association (Seaba) Champions Cup in Jakarta.

"We have to adjust to the international style of play," Baculi said yesterday. "We're used to the Western style of play, the one-on-one games in the NBA."

The club tournament slated April 9 to 14 will be the first international stint for most of the players in the PBL selection bannered by collegiate stars JC Intal, Jason Castro, Jojo Duncil and Marvin Cruz.

"In international games, they use the zone defense more," noted Baculi. "The trend in Southeast Asia is a running game. There's more running because of our size, we have to adjust to that."

Harbour Centre-Philippines will be shored up by veteran internationalist Julius Nwosu, the 6-foot-8 former PBA import who had also suited up for the Nigerian national team and other leagues in 14 different countries in Europe, America, Asia and the Middle East.

The 36-year-old Nwosu arrived from the United States last Saturday and quickly joined the team's training session.

Minus Nwosu in the lineup, Baculi said Habour Centre-Philippines is a "small team" with an average height of 6-foot-2.

"Our weakness is our height and the (short) length of time for training," he said. "But we have good shooters. We made sure that even if you're a big man, you must be able to shoot from 10 to 12 feet."

After yesterday's one-day break, Baculi said the team is bracing for "hell week" as their practice sessions intensify leading to the country's first international tournament following a two-year Fiba (international basketball federation) ban.

"The strong point of this team is the players' attitude," said Baculi. "For most of them, it's their first time to compete internationally and they have to sacrifice—from waking up early, to practicing twice a day. They're also superstars in their mother teams. But instead of just receiving and shooting the ball, they have to learn to pass more."

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Metro Pacific to invest ₱600M in Makati Med

Gets board nod to buy convertible notes

By Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

METRO PACIFIC INVESTMENT CORP. (MPIC) HAS OBTAINED board approval to invest P600 million next month in the cash-strapped Makati Medical Center through a subscription to the hospital's convertible notes offering.

Hospital operator Medical Doctors Inc. (MDI), which runs the Makati Medical Center, secured last month the nod of the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) to offer up to P900 million in convertible notes to raise funds for the hospital's facility makeover.

MPIC president Jose Ma. Lim said the Metro Pacific group was not subscribing to the entire tranche as other shareholders of the hospital expressed interest in exercising their respective rights to subscribe to the issue.

The fund raising activity will also ensure the implementation of a loan-restructuring program for the hospital. MDI's creditors have required an equity or quasi-equity infusion as one of the requirements before agreeing to restructure the company's loans.

The convertible notes will carry a 7-percent interest rate a year, payable semi-annually and may be converted to shares at a price of P800 each. The notes will be first offered to existing shareholders of MDI. Any portion not taken up will be offered to not more than 19 institutional investors.

MDI has more than 1,000 specialists and 1,493 regular employees as of Dec. 31. It is considered a public company with 643 stockholders each holding at least 100 shares. The majority stockholders consist of local companies and individual medical practitioners.

About 10 percent of Makati Med is owned by the Fores and Araneta families while 5 percent is held by the San Miguel Corp. (SMC) group.

In 2004, MDI suffered cash flow problems, which hampered its ability to service its maturing debts. Staring in the first quarter of 2004, the company has been unable to

METRO/ B6

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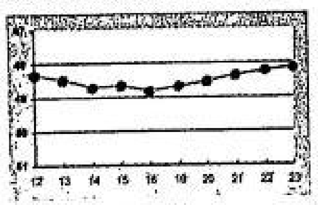

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STOCK MARKET

Thinner trading seen

TRADING THIS WEEK IS SEEN TO BE marked by light volumes with bouts of energy from new share offerings such as those

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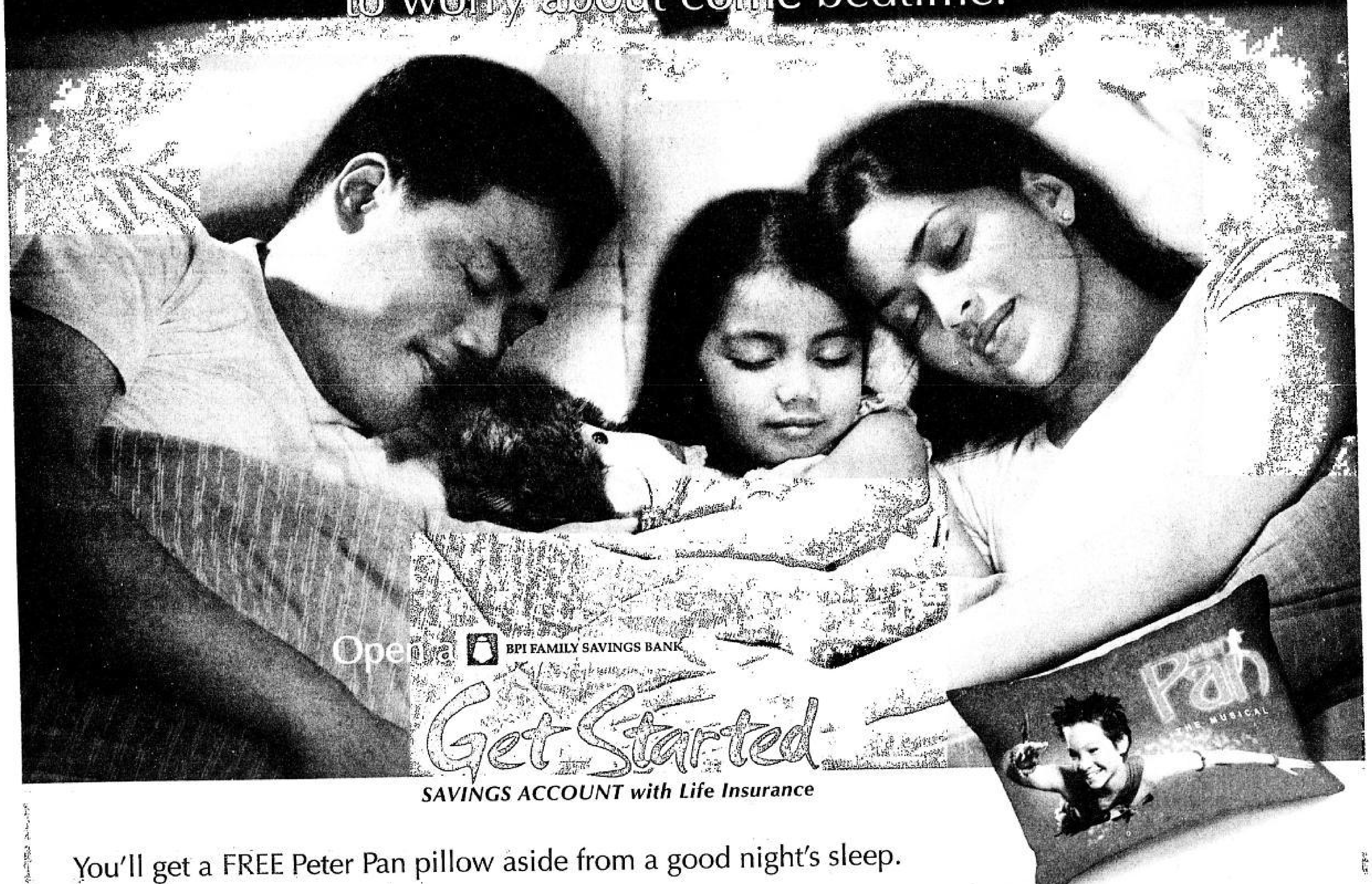
IN THIS ISSUE

- ▨ **Pag-IBIG** OKs P6.18B in dividends to gov't /B3
- ▨ **APC Group** seeks partners for energy ventures /B7
- ▨ **Investments** in autogas seen rising /B9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Captured regulators?

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Cielito F. Habito

A RECENT FORUM AT THE ATENEO DE Manila University highlighted what Secretary Romulo Neri of Neda describes as the costliest and most pernicious form of corruption in our economy: The corruption of policy through regulatory capture.

We are all well familiar with the more ubiquitous forms of corruption that have become so commonplace that too many of us have become desensitized and dangerously tolerant of them. One is bribery to facilitate government action, usually to expedite processing of an otherwise slow, improper or illegal transaction with the government. Another is overpricing in government projects and purchases, very much in the news these days with the P200,000 lampposts installed for the Asean meetings, or the similarly overpriced unbranded computers for public schools purchased with congressional pork barrel funds. The winners from these deals are obvious. The losers are the rest of us who are cheated out of our hard-earned tax pesos.

Substantial losses

In these cases, the resulting loss to the general welfare is well understood. But all these are nothing compared to what we lose when sound economic policies are thwarted by regulators who are captured by the very interests they are supposed to regulate. One peso spent by a particular business interest to "capture" a regulator can yield him perhaps a hundred pesos in unearned profits, but bring about a thousand pesos worth of loss to the public interest. These come in the form of loss of investments and jobs, workers' income, and economic productivity, and a general reduction in social and consumer welfare. Wonder why our investments as a ratio to total GDP have been conspicuously lower than our neighbors', and why total Philippine investments had been declining in absolute terms in the past two years? Here is one clear reason. Regulatory capture has been costing us, argues Secretary Neri, and it is costing us big.

Room to compete

Economic theory teaches us that regulators are there either to ensure and promote healthy competition, or where economies of scale make monopoly inevitable or even desirable (i.e., natural monopoly), ensure that the monopolizing firms do not take advantage of the consuming public and earn inordinate profits. There was a time in our distant past when the limited size of our domestic market led to natural monopolies in many sectors, thereby calling for regulation. But for telecommunications, shipping, air transport, energy and port services, our economy has grown enough through the years to provide room for competition and wider choice to Filipino consumers.

As early as 15 years ago, the Ramos government decided it was time to lift a number of government-sanctioned monopolies and allow entry of more competitors. I now often hear the observation that PLDT, previously resistant to sharing its pie with competitors, now enjoys a slice of the (now divided) industry pie that is far bigger than what the total pie was like when it still monopolized the telecoms industry. And this is essentially what happened in other key sectors as well: Competition unleashed rapid growth in the industries, which in the end benefited the former monopolists along with the newer industry players.

Captured regulators

Still, the agencies that make it to Neri's "most prone to capture" list include those regulating these same industries where more competition would do us all much good. These are the Philippine Ports Authority (PPA), Civil Aeronautics Board (CAB), Maritime Industry Authority (Marina), and traditionally but to a lesser extent lately, the National Telecommunications Commission (NTC) and the Energy Regulatory Commission (ERC).

PPA's posture that is seemingly protective of the interests of the dominant player in port handling services unduly raises the cost of cargo handling and turnaround time. This ultimately stifles growth of our productive sectors, including and especially agriculture, due to higher transport costs. The victims ultimately include the farmers who end up receiving a tiny portion of the final price of their product, squeezed by the high costs of bringing their goods to the final consumer.

Similarly, CAB's persistent tendency to restrict competition in international air transport (perceived, again, to favor the dominant player) continues to stifle growth in our tourism industry. And yet, tourism is the industry well-placed to provide millions of additional jobs relatively cheaply and quickly. I am convinced that tourism development must be prominent in our primary strategy for jobs generation. We only need to look at the experience of Thailand, Indonesia and now Cambodia, among our other

CAPTURED/ B6

METROBANK
Investment Fund Performance
(as of March 21, 2007)

Investment Funds	Fund Classification	Net Yield: Year On Year	Full Year 2006	Full Year 2005
PESO FUNDS				
Metrofund Starter	Money Market	7.21%	10.80%	7.63%
Metrofund Elite	Bond-Intermediate Term	7.93%	13.70%	10.23%
Metrofund Peak Earner	Bond-Medium Term	7.31%	13.74%	8.42%
Metro Invest Plus	Bond-Intermediate Term	7.96%	12.69%	8.25%
Metro Capital Growth Fund	Balanced Fund	35.75%	41.24%	13.75%
DOLLAR FUNDS				
Metrodollar Phil. Liquid Fund	Bond-Intermediate Term	6.15%	7.06%	5.74%
Metrodollar Phil. Bond Fund	Bond-Medium Term	8.15%	9.69%	9.17%
Metro Dollar Asian Bond Fund	Bond-Medium Term	5.24%	4.27%	0.99%

*Absolute Yield
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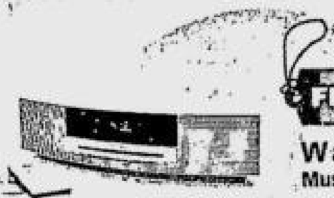

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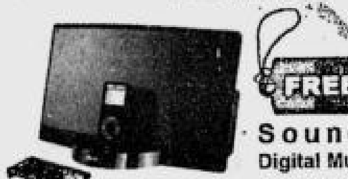

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		269,000	55,621	39,637	31,722	27,460
		329,000	52,145	37,160	29,739	25,744
		399,000	48,669	34,683	27,756	24,028

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NISSAN

Pag-IBIG OKs P6.18B in dividends to gov't

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE BOARD OF STATE-CONTROLLED Home Development Mutual Fund, popularly known as the Pag-IBIG Fund, has declared P6.18 billion in cash dividend to the national government out of its 2006 earnings.

The cash dividend approved by the Pag-IBIG board last week comprised 80 percent of the fund's P7.7-billion net income last year or higher than the minimum 70 percent required by its charter. It was also an all-time high for the housing agency, according to Pag-IBIG president Romero Quimbo.

Quimbo added that the 2006 dividend represented the biggest percentage cut ever distributed by the housing mutual fund to its members, leading to a dividend rate of 4.81 percent. In 2005, the fund paid out P5.54 billion in cash dividends, up from P4.85 billion in 2004, P4.21 billion in 2003, P3.74 billion in 2002 and P3.44 billion in 2001.

The amount will be credited proportionately to the members' total accumulated savings.

Quimbo said the steady increase in annual dividends declared by the fund signified its continued growth and stable financial standing, backed by its proven track record as a key player in housing finance.

"More effective collection procedures and more efficient fund management resulted in the fund's profitability. More income for the fund eventually leads to higher dividends and better services for our 6.48 million members worldwide," Quimbo said.

Pag-IBIG Fund serves the niche market that banks avoid, the low-cost housing sector.

As part of its reforms, the mutual fund is voluntarily migrating to international accounting standards, putting up loan-loss provisions like banks even if not required to do so.

Pag-IBIG Fund is the country's leading source of housing financing. The fresh infusion of funds estimated at P25 billion for this year, including the P2-billion housing bond

PAG-IBIG/ B6

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Equity Fund	1.537589	1.568430

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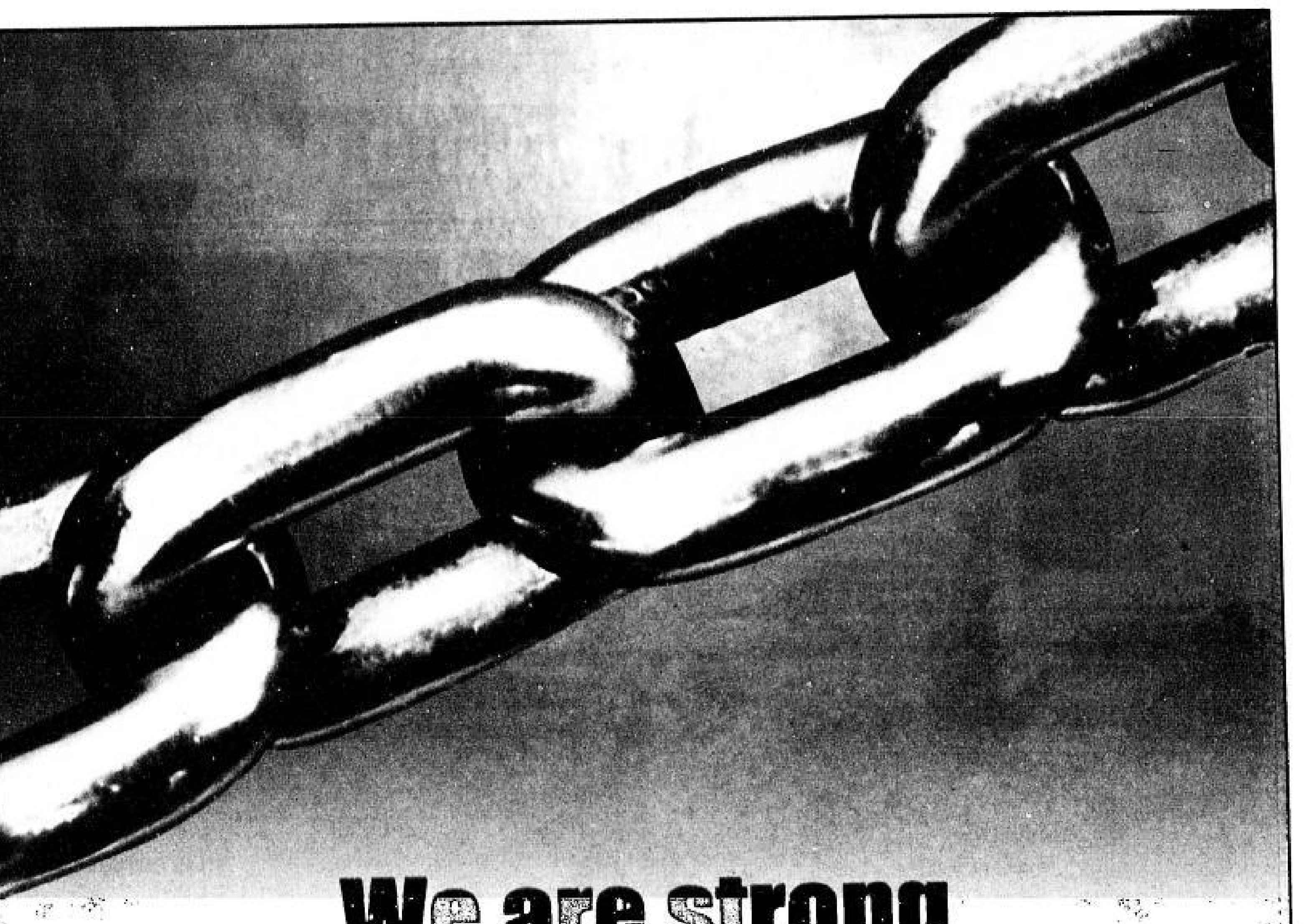

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INTRODUCING
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Belle eyes property deal with Puyats

Developing leisure areas outside Tagaytay

By Doris C. Dumlao

PROPERTY AND GAMING FIRM BELLE CORP is expanding its upscale leisure estate business outside of flagship Tagaytay Highlands, starting off next semester with a multibillion-peso partnership with the Puyat family on a plush horse-farming community project in Bagong Silang, Cavite.

Belle is also looking at opportunities in other popular tourist destinations like Baguio, Caliraya or even outside Luzon, creating a leisure estate chain that will allow members of each club to enjoy the facilities of the sister-clubs, Belle vice chair Willy Ocier said.

"We will not concentrate only on the property in Tagaytay. We've actually seen good potential in leveraging our brand name and assets in Tagaytay Highlands and export them to other areas," Ocier said in an interview with INQUIRER.

In line with this strategy, Ocier said Belle was now finalizing a joint-venture deal with the Puyat family on the development of the latter's remaining 80-hectare property adjacent to the lot sold to the Ayalas and now developed into Westgrove Heights in Sta. Rosa, Laguna.

He said Belle had signed an agreement allowing the Puyat family to operate and acquire part of its horsetrack racing franchise, Metro Manila Turf Club. The plan is to set up a new world-class horsetrack racing facility using 40-45 hectares out of the entire Cavite property.

As part of this partnership, he said Belle would invest about P2 billion to develop a 30-hectare portion of the property--currently a mango plantation--into a "first-class horse-farming community, with five-star facilities similar to Tagaytay Highlands."

"That's one deal that will signal Belle's movement away from just being in Highlands," he said. "There will be homes, villas, duplexes, stable facilities for horses and sports club for families."

Ocier noted that the company would like to offer more products to the growing base of investors over the next 10 years, particularly the affluent overseas Filipino community, many of whom were looking for good property assets that they will use for vacation or eventual retirement.

The joint venture with the Puyat family will just be the tip of the iceberg, he said.

"The direction of trying to develop outside is so that members can have one (club) share and use other facilities nationwide, let's say if we put up facilities in Baguio, Sta. Rosa, Dumaguete or Pagudpud," he said. "I also like Cebu, Bohol and all those potentially good tourist spots."

But the development of the flagship brand Tagaytay Highlands will continue as only half of the 1,600-property has so far been tapped, he said. Belle's subsidiary and spin-off unit, Highlands Prime (controlled by retail tycoon Henry Sy), owns the undeveloped area.

He added that Belle itself, which has 6,000 members at present, could still sell about 7,000 shares.

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CLUB	SHARES AVAILABLE SELLER	BUYER
Alabang Country Club A/B*	1,100,000/Pls. Call*	1,050,000
Alta Vista A/B*/Corp.**	-	300,000/Pls. Call*/475,000**
Baguio Country Club	600,000	650,000
Camp John Hay	330,000	-
Canlubang Golf	480,000	420,000
Canyon Woods	120,000	-
Capitol Hills	40,000	-
Cebu Country Club	Pls. Call	Pls. Call
Celebrity Sports	Pls. Call	-
City Sports Cebu	-	350,000
Club Filipino	90,000	Pls. Call
Eagleridge A/B*/C**	170,000/Pls. Call*/Pls. Call**	140,000/200,000*
Eastridge A/B*	150,000*	-
Evercrest	65,000	-
Fairways & Bluewater	Pls. Call	Pls. Call
Forest Hills A/B*/C**	90,000/150,000*	120,000*
Luisita Golf B	Pls. Call	380,000
Manila Golf Corporate	Pls. Call	13,000,000
Manila Golf Individual	Pls. Call	11,600,000
Manila Polo	Pls. Call	2,900,000
Manila Southwoods A/B*	300,000/Pls. Call*	-
Makati Sports Club A	200,000	Pls. Call
Manila Yacht Club Ind.	280,000	-
Metropolitan Club A/B*	150,000	-
Mimosa Ind./C2*/C3**	220,000	Pls. Call/550,000**
Mt. Malarayat A	180,000	-
Orchard A/B*/C**	180,000/Pls. Call*/320,000**	150,000
Punta Fuego	Pls. Call	Pls. Call
Quezon City Sports Club	Pls. Call	Pls. Call
Riviera Golf A/B*/C**	80,000/170,000*/250,000**	Pls. Call*
Rockwell Leisure Club	Pls. Call	200,000
Royale Tagaytay CC	65,000	-
Sherwood A/B*/C**	70,000/150,000**	100,000*
Splendido Taal	200,000	Pls. Call
Sta. Elena Golf A/B*	Pls. Call	-
Subic Golf	190,000	-
Summit Point A	280,000	-
The Palms Country Club	380,000	330,000
Country Club at Tagaytay Highlands	380,000	-
Tagaytay Highlands	700,000	640,000
Tagaytay Midlands	Pls. Call	Pls. Call
The Country Club	2,000,000	-
Tower Club A/B*	150,000/180,000*	-
Valley Golf	-	180,000
Valle Verde Ind.	100,000	-
Wack Wack Golf	Pls. Call	7,500,000

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ALABANG COUNTRY CLUB "A"	1,300,000	1,050,000
ALABANG COUNTRY CLUB "B"	1,300,000	1,100,000
BAGUIO COUNTRY CLUB	600,000	540,000
CALATAGAN GOLF CLUB "B"	60,000	50,000
CAMP JOHN HAY	330,000	300,000
CANLUBANG	450,000	420,000
CANYON WOODS	120,000	-
CAPITOL HILLS	40,000	20,000
CEBU COUNTRY CLUB	1,900,000	1,700,000
CELEBRITY SPORTS CLUB	100,000	90,000
CLUB FILIPINO	100,000	-
EAGLERIDGE "A"/"B"/"C"	Please Call	-
FOREST HILLS "A"	90,000	75,000
FOREST HILLS "C"	200,000	-
LUISITA GOLF "A"	350,000	270,000
MAKATI SPORTS CLUB "A"	220,000	190,000
MAKATI SPORTS CLUB "B"	250,000	190,000
MANILA GOLF (CORP)	-	13,000,000
MANILA GOLF (IND)	-	11,600,000
MANILA POLO	Please Call	2,700,000
MANILA SOUTHWOODS "A"	320,000	-
MANILA SOUTHWOODS "B"	750,000	650,000
MANILA YACHT CLUB	200,000	-
MIMOSA (IND)	230,000	-
MT. MALARAYAT GOLD "A"	180,000	-
MT. MALARAYAT GOLD "C"	350,000	-
ORCHARD GOLF CLUB "A"	170,000	150,000
ORCHARD GOLF CLUB "B"	290,000	-
ORCHARD GOLF CLUB "C"	400,000	-
QUEZON CITY SPORTS CLUB	170,000	145,000
SPA & LODGE	550,000	450,000
STA. ELENA "A"	-	1,500,000
SUBIC BAY YACHT (CORP)	150,000	-
TAGAYTAY COUNTRY CLUB	300,000	-
TAGAYTAY HIGHLANDS	750,000	630,000
TAGAYTAY MIDLANDS	730,000	620,000
VALLE VERDE (IND)	100,000	-
VALLEY GOLF	250,000	180,000
WACK-WACK GOLF CLUB	-	7,300,000

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PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of March 23, 2007)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
FINANCIAL					
BANKS					
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	4,600
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	58.5	58.5	58	58	1,273,100
Bank of the Phil. Islands	65	66	64.5	65.5	2,606,300
China Banking Corp.	870	870	870	870	3,550
Citystate Savings Bank	20	20	20	20	300
Export and Ind. Bank A	0.55	0.55	0.54	0.55	3,970,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	103	103	100	100	144,010
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	61.5	62	59.5	62	1,860,100
Philippine National Bank	47.5	47.5	47.5	47.5	1,000
Phil. Savings Bank	62	62	62	62	5,000
Security Bank Corp.	77	79	77	78.5	525,900
OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS					
Citiseconline.Com Inc.	6.8	6.8	6.7	6.8	257,000
First Metro Invest. Corp.	38	38	38	38	10,000
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	2	2	1.86	1.9	352,000
Phil. Stock Exchange Inc.	650	660	650	650	201,900
Ivantage Corp.	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.6	60,000
INDUSTRIAL					
ELECTRICITY, ENERGY, POWER & WATER					
PNOC Energy Dev. Corp.	6.3	6.3	6.1	6.2	29,271,000
First Gen Corp.	54.5	55.5	54.5	55.5	634,300
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	71.5	71.5	70.5	71	246,100
Manila Electric Co. A	71	71	70	70.5	34,500
Manila Electric Co. B	71.5	71.5	70	70.5	1,173,900
Manila Water Co. Inc.	9.3	9.3	9.2	9.3	786,000
Petron Corp.	4.5	4.55	4.45	4.5	4,610,000
East Asia Power Res. Corp.	0.29	0.3	0.29	0.3	1,170,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	1.48	1.48	1.44	1.44	571,000
FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO					
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	25	25	25	25	19,000
Jollibee Foods Corp.	53.5	56.5	53	56.5	489,900
Pancake House Inc.	6.6	6.6	6.6	6.6	10,000
RFM Corp.	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	200,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	2.5	2.5	2.48	2.48	85,000
Swift Food Inc.	0.4	0.41	0.4	0.41	230,000
San Miguel Corp. A	64	64	64	64	81,500
San Miguel Corp. B	74.5	74.5	73.5	74	127,600
Alliance Tuna Int'l. Inc.	2.3	2.38	2.26	2.36	3,029,000
Universal Robina Corp.	17.5	17.5	17	17.25	1,274,300
CONSTRUCTION, INFRASTRUCTURE & ALLIED SERVICES					
Southeast Asian Cement	1.68	1.7	1.68	1.7	10,630,000
Engineering Equip. Inc.	4.9	4.9	4.7	4.8	3,589,000
Holcim Philippines Inc.	8.5	8.7	8.5	8.7	159,000
Republic Cement Corp.	5.8	5.8	5.8	5.8	3,000
CHEMICALS					
Chemrez Technologies Inc.	5	5.1	5	5.1	1,194,000
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	150,000
DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS					
Picop Resources Inc.	0.34	0.34	0.34	0.34	3,270,000
Panasonic Mfg Phil Corp.	6.5	6.5	6.5	6.5	10,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.014	0.015	0.014	0.015	1,098,000,000
Abacus Con Res & Hdg B	0.015	0.016	0.015	0.016	111,600,000
Ayala Corp.	550	555	540	545	706,690
Alsons Cons. Res. Inc.	1.04	1.04	0.92	0.95	10,950,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	8.3	8.3	8.1	8.2	4,382,000
Alliance Global Group Inc.	7.2	7.3	7	7	2,173,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.075	0.075	0.0725	0.0725	5,900,000
A. Soriano Corp.	3.4	3.45	3.4	3.45	92,000
APC Group Inc.	0.39	0.41	0.39	0.4	8,670,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.012	0.012	0.012	0.012	303,500,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	1.62	1.64	1.56	1.62	15,862,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	1.62	1.62	1.62	1.62	10,000
ATN Holdings Inc. B	1.86	1.86	1.86	1.86	30,000
Pal Holdings Inc.	3.6	3.8	3.6	3.8	251,000
Balabac Resources & Hldgs	4.45	4.45	4.25	4.3	272,000
Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc.	9.9	9.9	9.8	9.9	17,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	3.5	3.5	3.35	3.4	15,969,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	7	7.2	7	7.2	176,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	5	5.1	5	5.1	250,000
F&J Princ.E Holdings Corp.	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	10,000
House Of Investments Inc.	2.6	2.7	2.6	2.7	255,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	12.75	12.75	12.75	12.75	162,000
Keppel Holdings	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.6	6,000
Medco Holdings	0.34	0.36	0.34	0.35	400,000
Mabuhay Holdings Corp.	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	30,000
Magnum Holdings Inc.	9.3	9.3	8.9	9.2	944,000
Multitech Inv. Corp.	2.36	2.36	2.28	2.34	3,032,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	0.32	0.36	0.3	0.35	64,120,000
Republic Glass Hldg. Corp.	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	10,000
Solid Group Inc.	0.73	0.73	0.72	0.72	300,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.32	0.35	0.3	0.33	75,550,000
SM Investments Corp.	367.5	370	362.5	370	124,410
South China Resources Inc.	1.14	1.16	1.12	1.14	980,000
Seafront Resources Corp.	1.54	1.54	1.52	1.52	75,000
Vivant Corp.	1.16	1.2	1.16	1.2	10,000
Wellex Industries Inc.	0.21	0.21	0.195	0.195	1,300,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	15.5	15.75	15.25	15.75	18,283,100
Belle Corp.	1.44	1.44	1.42	1.42	4,967,000
A Brown Company Inc.	1.24	1.26	1.22	1.26	152,000
Cityland Development Corp.	2	2.1	2	2.1	75,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.47	0.47	0.47	0.47	400,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	3.8	3.8	3.8	3.8	636,000
C & P Homes Inc.	2.5	2.6	2.5	2.55	159,000
Cebu Prop. Vent. A	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.7	42,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.39	0.45	0.36	0.44	81,940,000
EIB Realty Developers Inc.	0.24	0.28	0.24	0.28	1,500,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.77	0.77	0.76	0.76	8,590,000
Ever-Gotesco Resources	0.105	0.12	0.105	0.115	60,810,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.68	1.68	1.66	1.68	8,438,000
Gotesco Land Inc.	0.29	0.3	0.29	0.29	790,000
Interport Res.	0.011	0.011	0.011	0.011	74,700,000
Interport Res. B	0.011	0.011	0.011	0.011	30,000,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.49	0.5	0.48	0.48	2,430,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.83	0.83	0.81	0.81	2,150,000
Marsteel Cons. Inc. A	0.022	0.022	0.022	0.022	500,000
Marsteel Cons. Inc. B	0.021	0.021	0.021	0.021	500,000
Megaworld Corp.	3.25	3.25	3.15	3.2	30,903,000
Metro Pacific Inv. Corp.	4.6	4.6	4.6	4.6	75,000
MRC Allied Ind. Inc.	0.93	0.93	0.89	0.89	35,350,000
Polar Property Holdings	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.6	80,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	18.75	19	18.75	19	9,204,400
Phil Realty And Holdings	0.6	0.61	0.6	0.6	4,460,000
SM Development Corp.	3.8	3.8	3.75	3.8	1,124,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	11.25	11.25	10.75	11	7,095,000
Suntrust Home Dev. Inc.	0.67	0.68	0.67	0.67	370,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.24	0.26	0.235	0.25	26,540,000
Zipporah Rlty Hldgs Inc.	0.76	1	0.76	1	90,000
MEDIA					
Abs-Cbn Broadcasting Corp.	24.75	24.75	24.5	24.5	77,100
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp.	1.02	1.04	1.02	1.04	18,000
TELECOMMUNICATIONS					
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	1.74	1.74	1.7	1.7	4,589,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	1300	1300	1290	1290	33,050
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	7	7	6.8	7	3,541,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	2525	2525	2490	2495	98,020
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY					
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.27	0.28	0.25	0.26	38,880,000
Diversified Fin. Network	3.8	3.8	3.8	3.8	41,000
Imperial Res.	0.022	0.023	0.022	0.023	51,000,000
IPVG Corp.	6.4	6.7	6.2	6.6	2,130,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.0625	0.065	0.0625	0.065	4,000,000
Music Semiconductors Corp.	1.64	1.64	1.6	1.62	327,000
Transpacific Broadband	2.1	2.14	2.1	2.12	61,000
Philweb Corp.	0.047	0.047	0.046	0.046	72,600,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	4.2	4.25	4.2	4.25	126,000
Aboitiz Trans. Sys. Corp.	1.38	1.42	1.38	1.42	302,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	28.5	28.5	27	27.5	6,711,100
Keppel Phils. Marine Inc.	1.16	1.16	1.14	1.16	638,000
Lorenzo Shipping Corp.	1.2	1.26	1.2	1.26	8,000
HOTEL & LEISURE					
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	3.95	3.95	3.65	3.7	5,559,000
Philippine Racing Club	3.15	3.15	3	3	12,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	1.02	1.08	0.99	1	31,241,000
EDUCATION					
Centro Escolar University	7.9	7.9	7.9	7.9	5,000
iPeople Inc.	3.3	3.3	3.3	3.3	231,000
DIVERSIFIED SERVICES					
Macroasia Corp.	2.65	2.75	2.6	2.75	778,000
Paxys Inc.	26.5	28	26.5	28	1,007,900
MINING					
Apex Mining Co. Inc. A	5	5.4	4.9	5.3	1,456,000
Apex Mining Co. Inc. B	5	5.3	5	5.3	560,000
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.013	0.013	0.012	0.012	276,100,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	11.25	11.5	11	11.5	12,509,400
Benguet Corp. A	11	11.5	11	11.5	14,500
Geograce Res. Phil. Inc.	1.68	1.74	1.64	1.72	68,029,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.29	0.29	0.29	0.29	4,040,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co. B	0.34	0.34	0.34	0.34	60,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.029	0.029	0.028	0.028	221,600,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.034	0.034	0.034	0.034	97,900,000
Omico Corp.	0.02	0.02	0.019	0.02	744,400,000
Philex Mining Corp.	4.4	4.5	4.4	4.5	10,040,000
Semirara Mining Corp.	21.5	21.75	21	21.5	158,100
United Paragon Mining Co.	0.72	0.74	0.72	0.74	1,450,000
Vulcan Ind'l	1.24	1.26	1.22	1.26	2,918,000
OIL					
Basic Petroleum Corp.	0.54	0.58	0.53	0.56	40,880,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.014	0.014	0.014	0.014	482,100,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.014	0.015	0.014	0.015	189,800,000
The Philodrill Corp.	0.013	0.013	0.012	0.013	679,800,000
Petroenergy Res. Corp.	9.5	9.5	9.5	9.5	12,000

CURRENCIES

March 23, 2007 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.750019	1.000000	48.2610
Japan	Yen	0.006353	0.008470	0.4088
United Kingdom	Pound	1.473787	1.965000	94.8329
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.096044	0.128056	6.1801
Switzerland	Franc	0.617757	0.823655	39.7504
Canada	Dollar	0.648412	0.864528	41.7230
Singapore	Dollar	0.493758	0.658328	31.7716
Australia	Dollar	0.605636	0.807494	38.9705
Bahrain	Dinar*	1.989492	2.652590	128.0166
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.199994	0.266652	12.8689
Brunei	Dollar	0.492138	0.656168	31.6673
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000083	0.000110	0.0053
Thailand	Baht	0.023586	0.031447	1.5177
UAE	Dirham	0.204265	0.272346	13.1437
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.333300	64.3464
Korea	Won	0.000800	0.001067	0.0515
China	Yuan**	0.097070	0.129423	6.2461
Argentina	Peso	0.242137	0.322841	15.5806
Brazil	Real	0.364618	0.486145	23.4618
Denmark	Kroner	0.134260	0.179009	8.6392
India	Rupee	0.017178	0.022904	1.1054
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.216455	0.288600	13.9281
Mexico	New Peso	0.068048	0.090728	4.3786
New Zealand	Dollar	0.535307	0.713725	34.4451
South Africa	Rand	0.104330	0.139103	6.7132
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.022738	0.030316	1.4631

Source: Reuters' forex closing prices as of NY Time—March 22, 2007
* Various banks in Bahrain as quoted in Reuters' Screen.
** Asian time closing rate as of March 22, 2007

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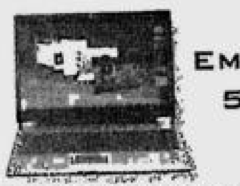

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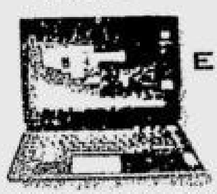

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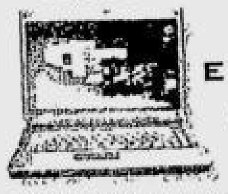

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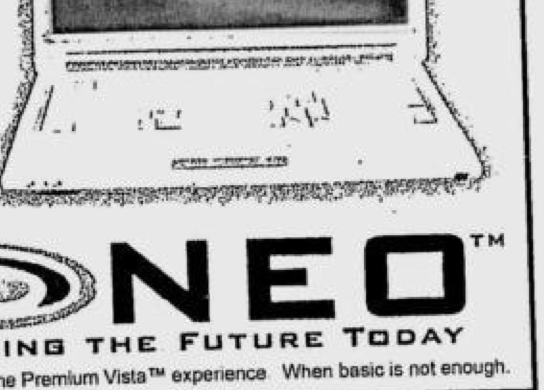

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Belle eyes property deal with Puyats

Developing leisure areas outside Tagaytay

By Doris C. Dumlao

PROPERTY AND GAMING FIRM BELLE CORP. is expanding its upscale leisure estate business outside of flagship Tagaytay Highlands, starting off next semester with a multibillion-peso partnership with the Puyat family on a plush horse-farming community project in Bagong Silang, Cavite.

Belle is also looking at opportunities in other popular tourist destinations like Baguio, Caliraya or even outside Luzon, creating a leisure estate chain that will allow members of each club to enjoy the facilities of the sister-clubs, Belle vice chair Willy Ocier said.

"We will not concentrate only on the property in Tagaytay. We've actually seen good potential in leveraging our brand name and assets in Tagaytay Highlands and export them to other areas," Ocier said in an interview with INQUIRER.

In line with this strategy, Ocier said Belle was now finalizing a joint-venture deal with the Puyat family on the development of the latter's remaining 80-hectare property adjacent to the lot sold to the Ayalas and now developed into Westgrove Heights in Sta. Rosa, Laguna.

He said Belle had signed an agreement allowing the Puyat family to operate and acquire part of its horsetrack racing franchise, Metro Manila Turf Club. The plan is to set up a new world-class horsetrack racing facility using 40-45 hectares out of the entire Cavite property.

As part of this partnership, he said Belle would invest about P2 billion to develop a 30-hectare portion of the property--currently a mango plantation--into a "first-class horse-farming community, with five-star facilities similar to Tagaytay Highlands."

"That's one deal that will signal Belle's movement away from just being in Highlands," he said. "There will be homes, villas, duplexes, stable facilities for horses and sports club for families."

Ocier noted that the company would like to offer more products to the growing base of investors over the next 10 years, particularly the affluent overseas Filipino community, many of whom were looking for good property assets that they will use for vacation or eventual retirement.

The joint venture with the Puyat family will just be the tip of the iceberg, he said.

"The direction of trying to develop outside is so that members can have one (club) share and use other facilities nationwide, let's say if we put up facilities in Baguio, Sta. Rosa, Dumaguete or Pagudpud," he said. "I also like Cebu, Bohol and all those potentially good tourist spots."

But the development of the flagship brand Tagaytay Highlands will continue as only half of the 1,600-property has so far been tapped, he said. Belle's subsidiary and spin-off unit, Highlands Prime (controlled by retail tycoon Henry Sy), owns the undeveloped area.

He added that Belle itself, which has 6,000 members at present, could still sell about 7,000 shares.

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SHARES AVAILABLE

CLUB	SELLER	BUYER
Alabang Country Club A/B*	1,100,000/Pls. Call*	1,050,000
Alta Vista A/B*/Corp.**	-	300,000/Pls. Call*/475,000**
Baguio Country Club	600,000	550,000
Camp John Hay	330,000	-
Canlubang Golf	480,000	420,000
Canyon Woods	120,000	-
Capitol Hills	40,000	-
Cebu Country Club	Pls. Call	Pls. Call
Celebrity Sports	Pls. Call	-
City Sports Cebu	-	360,000
Club Filipino	90,000	Pls. Call
Eagleridge A/B*/C**	170,000/Pls. Call*/Pls. Call**	140,000/200,000*
Eastridge A/B*	150,000*	-
Evercrest	65,000	-
Fairways & Bluewater	Pls. Call	Pls. Call
Forest Hills A/B*/C**	90,000/150,000**	120,000*
Luisita Golf B	Pls. Call	380,000
Manila Golf Corporate	Pls. Call	13,000,000
Manila Golf Individual	Pls. Call	11,600,000
Manila Polo	Pls. Call	2,900,000
Manila Southwoods A/B*	300,000/Pls. Call*	-
Makati Sports Club A	200,000	Pls. Call
Manila Yacht Club Ind.	280,000	-
Metropolitan Club A/B*	150,000	-
Mimosa Ind./C2*/C3**	220,000	Pls. Call/550,000**
Mt. Malarayat A	180,000	-
Orchard A/B*/C**	180,000/Pls. Call*/350,000**	150,000
Punta Fuego	Pls. Call	Pls. Call
Quezon City Sports Club	Pls. Call	Pls. Call
Riviera Golf A/B*/C**	80,000/170,000*/250,000**	Pls. Call*
Rockwell Leisure Club	Pls. Call	200,000
Royale Tagaytay CC	65,000	-
Sherwood A/B*/C**	70,000/150,000**	100,000*
Splendido Taal	200,000	Pls. Call
Sta. Elena Golf A/B*	Pls. Call	-
Subic Golf	180,000	-
Summit Point A	250,000	-
The Palms Country Club	380,000	330,000
Country Club at Tagaytay Highlands	380,000	-
Tagaytay Highlands	700,000	640,000
Tagaytay Midlands	Pls. Call	Pls. Call
The Country Club	2,000,000	-
Tower Club A/B*	150,000/180,000*	-
Valley Golf	-	180,000
Valle Verde Ind.	100,000	-
Wack Wack Golf	Pls. Call	7,500,000

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ALABANG COUNTRY CLUB "A"	1,300,000	1,050,000
ALABANG COUNTRY CLUB "B"	1,300,000	1,100,000
BAGUIO COUNTRY CLUB	600,000	540,000
CALATAGAN GOLF CLUB "B"	60,000	50,000
CAMP JOHN HAY	330,000	300,000
CANLUBANG	450,000	420,000
CANYON WOODS	120,000	-
CAPITOL HILLS	40,000	20,000
CEBU COUNTRY CLUB	1,900,000	1,700,000
CELEBRITY SPORTS CLUB	100,000	90,000
CLUB FILIPINO	100,000	-
EAGLERIDGE "A"/"B"/"C"	Please Call	-
FOREST HILLS "A"	90,000	75,000
FOREST HILLS "C"	200,000	-
LUISITA GOLF "A"	350,000	270,000
MAKATI SPORTS CLUB "A"	220,000	190,000
MAKATI SPORTS CLUB "B"	250,000	190,000
MANILA GOLF (CORP)	-	13,000,000
MANILA GOLF (IND)	-	11,600,000
MANILA POLO	Please Call	2,700,000
MANILA SOUTHWOODS "A"	320,000	-
MANILA SOUTHWOODS "B"	750,000	650,000
MANILA YACHT CLUB	200,000	-
MIMOSA (IND)	230,000	-
MT. MALARAYAT GOLD "A"	180,000	-
MT. MALARAYAT GOLD "C"	350,000	-
ORCHARD GOLF CLUB "A"	170,000	150,000
ORCHARD GOLF CLUB "B"	280,000	-
ORCHARD GOLF CLUB "C"	400,000	-
QUEZON CITY SPORTS CLUB	170,000	145,000
SPA & LODGE	550,000	450,000
STA. ELENA "A"	-	1,500,000
SUBIC BAY YACHT (CORP)	150,000	-
TAGAYTAY COUNTRY CLUB	300,000	-
TAGAYTAY HIGHLANDS	750,000	630,000
TAGAYTAY MIDLANDS	730,000	620,000
VALLE VERDE (IND)	100,000	-
VALLEY GOLF	250,000	180,000
WACK-WACK GOLF CLUB	-	7,300,000

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BANKS					
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	4,600
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	58.5	58.5	58	58	1,273,100
Bank of the Phil. Islands	65	66	64.5	65.5	2,606,300
China Banking Corp.	870	870	870	870	3,550
Citystate Savings Bank	20	20	20	20	300
Export and Ind. Bank A	0.55	0.55	0.54	0.55	3,970,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	103	103	100	100	144,010
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	61.5	62	59.5	62	1,860,100
Philippine National Bank	47.5	47.5	47.5	47.5	1,000
Phil. Savings Bank	62	62	62	62	5,000
Security Bank Corp.	77	79	77	78.5	525,900
OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS					
Citisecoline.Com Inc.	6.8	6.8	6.7	6.8	257,000
First Metro Invest. Corp.	38	38	38	38	10,000
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	2	2	1.86	1.9	352,000
Phil. Stock Exchange Inc.	650	660	650	650	201,900
Ivantage Corp.	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.6	60,000
INDUSTRIAL					
ELECTRICITY, ENERGY, POWER & WATER					
PNOC Energy Dev. Corp.	6.3	6.3	6.1	6.2	29,271,000
First Gen Corp.	54.5	55.5	54.5	55.5	634,300
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	71.5	71.5	70.5	71	246,100
Manila Electric Co. A	71	71	70	70.5	34,500
Manila Electric Co. B	71.5	71.5	70	70.5	1,173,900
Manila Water Co. Inc.	9.3	9.3	9.2	9.3	786,000
Petron Corp.	4.5	4.55	4.45	4.5	4,610,000
East Asia Power Res. Corp.	0.29	0.3	0.29	0.3	1,170,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	1.48	1.48	1.44	1.44	571,000
FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO					
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	25	25	25	25	19,000
Jollibee Foods Corp.	53.5	56.5	53	56.5	489,900
Pancake House Inc.	6.6	6.6	6.6	6.6	10,000
RFM Corp.	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	200,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	2.5	2.5	2.48	2.48	85,000
Swift Food Inc.	0.4	0.41	0.4	0.41	230,000
San Miguel Corp. A	64	64	64	64	81,500
San Miguel Corp. B	74.5	74.5	73.5	74	127,600
Alliance Tuna Int'l. Inc.	2.3	2.38	2.26	2.36	3,029,000
Universal Robina Corp.	17.5	17.5	17	17.25	1,274,300
CONSTRUCTION, INFRASTRUCTURE & ALLIED SERVICES					
Southeast Asian Cement	1.68	1.7	1.68	1.7	10,630,000
Engineering Equip. Inc.	4.9	4.9	4.7	4.8	3,589,000
Holcim Philippines Inc.	8.5	8.7	8.5	8.7	159,000
Republic Cement Corp.	5.8	5.8	5.8	5.8	3,000
CHEMICALS					
Chemrez Technologies Inc.	5	5.1	5	5.1	1,194,000
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	150,000
DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS					
Picop Resources Inc.	0.34	0.34	0.34	0.34	3,270,000
Panasonic Mfg Phil Corp.	6.5	6.5	6.5	6.5	10,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.014	0.015	0.014	0.015	1,098,000,000
Abacus Con Res & Hdg B	0.015	0.016	0.015	0.016	111,600,000
Ayala Corp.	550	555	540	545	706,690
Alsons Cons. Res. Inc.	1.04	1.04	0.92	0.95	10,950,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	8.3	8.3	8.1	8.2	4,382,000
Alliance Global Group Inc.	7.2	7.3	7	7	2,173,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.075	0.075	0.0725	0.0725	5,900,000
A. Soriano Corp.	3.4	3.45	3.4	3.45	92,000
APC Group Inc.	0.39	0.41	0.39	0.4	8,670,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.012	0.012	0.012	0.012	303,500,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	1.62	1.64	1.56	1.62	15,862,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	1.62	1.62	1.62	1.62	10,000
ATN Holdings Inc. B	1.86	1.86	1.86	1.86	30,000
Pal Holdings Inc.	3.6	3.8	3.6	3.8	251,000
Balabac Resources & Hldgs	4.45	4.45	4.25	4.3	272,000
Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc.	9.9	9.9	9.8	9.9	17,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	3.5	3.5	3.35	3.4	15,969,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	7	7.2	7	7.2	176,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	5	5.1	5	5.1	250,000
F&J Princ.E Holdings Corp.	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	10,000
House Of Investments Inc.	2.6	2.7	2.6	2.7	255,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	12.75	12.75	12.75	12.75	162,000
Keppel Holdings	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.6	6,000
Medco Holdings	0.34	0.36	0.34	0.35	400,000
Mabuhay Holdings Corp.	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	30,000
Magnum Holdings Inc.	9.3	9.3	8.9	9.2	944,000
Multitech Inv. Corp.	2.36	2.36	2.28	2.34	3,032,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	0.32	0.36	0.3	0.35	64,120,000
Republic Glass Hldg. Corp.	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	10,000
Solid Group Inc.	0.73	0.73	0.72	0.72	300,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.32	0.35	0.3	0.33	75,550,000
SM Investments Corp.	367.5	370	362.5	370	124,410
South China Resources Inc.	1.14	1.16	1.12	1.14	980,000
Seafront Resources Corp.	1.54	1.54	1.52	1.52	75,000
Vivant Corp.	1.16	1.2	1.16	1.2	10,000
Wellex Industries Inc.	0.21	0.21	0.195	0.195	1,300,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	15.5	15.75	15.25	15.75	18,283,100
Belle Corp.	1.44	1.44	1.42	1.42	4,967,000
A Brown Company Inc.	1.24	1.26	1.22	1.26	152,000
Cityland Development Corp.	2	2.1	2	2.1	75,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.47	0.47	0.47	0.47	400,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	3.8	3.8	3.8	3.8	636,000
C & P Homes Inc.	2.5	2.6	2.5	2.55	159,000
Cebu Prop. Vent. A	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.7	42,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.39	0.45	0.36	0.44	81,940,000
EIB Realty Developers Inc.	0.24	0.28	0.24	0.28	1,500,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.77	0.77	0.76	0.76	8,590,000
Ever-Gotesco Resources	0.105	0.12	0.105	0.115	60,810,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.68	1.68	1.66	1.68	8,438,000
Gotesco Land Inc.	0.29	0.3	0.29	0.29	780,000
Interport Res.	0.011	0.011	0.011	0.011	74,700,000
Interport Res. B	0.011	0.011	0.011	0.011	30,000,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.49	0.5	0.48	0.48	2,430,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.83	0.83	0.81	0.81	2,150,000
Marsteel Cons. Inc. A	0.022	0.022	0.022	0.022	500,000
Marsteel Cons. Inc. B	0.021	0.021	0.021	0.021	500,000
Megaworld Corp.	3.25	3.25	3.15	3.2	30,903,000
Metro Pacific Inv. Corp.	4.6	4.6	4.6	4.6	75,000
MRC Allied Ind. Inc.	0.93	0.93	0.89	0.89	35,350,000
Polar Property Holdings	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.6	80,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	18.75	19	18.75	19	9,204,400
Phil Realty And Holdings	0.6	0.61	0.6	0.6	4,460,000
SM Development Corp.	3.8	3.8	3.75	3.8	1,124,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	11.25	11.25	10.75	11	7,095,000
Suntrust Home Dev. Inc.	0.67	0.68	0.67	0.67	370,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.24	0.26	0.235	0.25	26,540,000
Zipporah Rlty Hldgs Inc.	0.76	1	0.76	1	90,000
MEDIA					
Abs-Cbn Broadcasting Corp.	24.75	24.75	24.5	24.5	77,100
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp.	1.02	1.04	1.02	1.04	18,000
TELECOMMUNICATIONS					
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	1.74	1.74	1.7	1.7	4,589,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	1300	1300	1290	1290	33,050
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	7	7	6.8	7	3,541,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	2525	2525	2490	2495	98,020
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY					
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.27	0.28	0.25	0.26	38,880,000
Diversified Fin. Network	3.8	3.8	3.8	3.8	41,000
Imperial Res.	0.022	0.023	0.022	0.023	51,000,000
IPVG Corp.	6.4	6.7	6.2	6.6	2,130,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.0625	0.065	0.0625	0.065	4,000,000
Music Semiconductors Corp.	1.64	1.64	1.6	1.62	327,000
Transpacific Broadband	2.1	2.14	2.1	2.12	61,000
Philweb Corp.	0.047	0.047	0.046	0.046	72,600,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	4.2	4.25	4.2	4.25	126,000
Aboitiz Trans. Sys. Corp.	1.38	1.42	1.38	1.42	302,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	28.5	28.5	27	27.5	6,711,100
Keppel Phils. Marine Inc.	1.16	1.16	1.14	1.16	638,000
Lorenzo Shipping Corp.	1.2	1.26	1.2	1.26	8,000
HOTEL & LEISURE					
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	3.95	3.95	3.65	3.7	5,559,000
Philippine Racing Club	3.15	3.15	3	3	12,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	1.02	1.08	0.99	1	31,241,000
EDUCATION					
Centro Escolar University	7.9	7.9	7.9	7.9	5,000
iPeople Inc.	3.3	3.3	3.3	3.3	231,000
DIVERSIFIED SERVICES					
Macroasia Corp.	2.65	2.75	2.6	2.75	778,000
Paxys Inc.	26.5	28	26.5	28	1,007,900
MINING					
Apex Mining Co. Inc. A	5	5.4	4.9	5.3	1,456,000
Apex Mining Co. Inc. B	5	5.3	5	5.3	560,000
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.013	0.013	0.012	0.012	276,100,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	11.25	11.5	11	11.5	12,509,400
Benguet Corp. A	11	11.5	11	11.5	14,500
Geograce Res. Phil. Inc.	1.68	1.74	1.64	1.72	68,029,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.29	0.29	0.29	0.29	4,040,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co. B	0.34	0.34	0.34	0.34	60,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.029	0.029	0.028	0.028	221,600,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.034	0.034	0.034	0.034	97,900,000
Omico Corp.	0.02	0.02	0.019	0.02	744,400,000
Philex Mining Corp.	4.4	4.5	4.4	4.5	10,040,000
Semirara Mining Corp.	21.5	21.75	21	21.5	158,100
United Paragon Mining Co.	0.72	0.74	0.72	0.74	1,450,000
Vulcan Ind'l	1.24	1.26	1.22	1.26	2,918,000
OIL					
Basic Petroleum Corp.	0.54	0.58	0.53	0.56	40,880,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.014	0.014	0.014	0.014	462,100,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.014	0.015	0.014	0.015	189,800,000
The Philodrill Corp.	0.013	0.013	0.012	0.013	679,800,000
Petroenergy Res. Corp.	9.5	9.5	9.5	9.5	12,000

CURRENCIES

March 23, 2007 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.750019	1.000000	48.2610
Japan	Yen	0.006353	0.008470	0.4088
United Kingdom	Pound	1.473787	1.965000	94.8329
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.096044	0.128056	6.1801
Switzerland	Franc	0.617757	0.823655	39.7504
Canada	Dollar	0.648412	0.864528	41.7230
Singapore	Dollar	0.493758	0.658328	31.7716
Australia	Dollar	0.605636	0.807494	38.9705
Bahrain	Dinar*	1.989492	2.652590	128.0166
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.199994	0.266652	12.8689
Brunei	Dollar	0.492138	0.656168	31.6673
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000083	0.000110	0.0053
Thailand	Baht	0.023586	0.031447	1.5177
UAE	Dirham	0.204265	0.272346	13.1437
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.333300	64.3464
Korea	Won	0.000800	0.001067	0.0515
China	Yuan**	0.097070	0.129423	6.2461
Argentina	Peso	0.242137	0.322841	15.5806
Brazil	Real	0.364618	0.486145	23.4618
Denmark	Kroner	0.134260	0.179009	8.6392
India	Rupee	0.017178	0.022904	1.1054
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.216455	0.288600	13.9281
Mexico	New Peso	0.068048	0.090728	4.3786
New Zealand	Dollar	0.535307	0.713725	34.4451
South Africa	Rand	0.104330	0.139103	6.7132
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.022738	0.030316	1.4631

Source: Reuters' forex closing prices as of NY Time—March 22, 2007

* Various banks in Bahrain as quoted in Reuters' Screen.

** Asian time closing rate as of March 22, 2007

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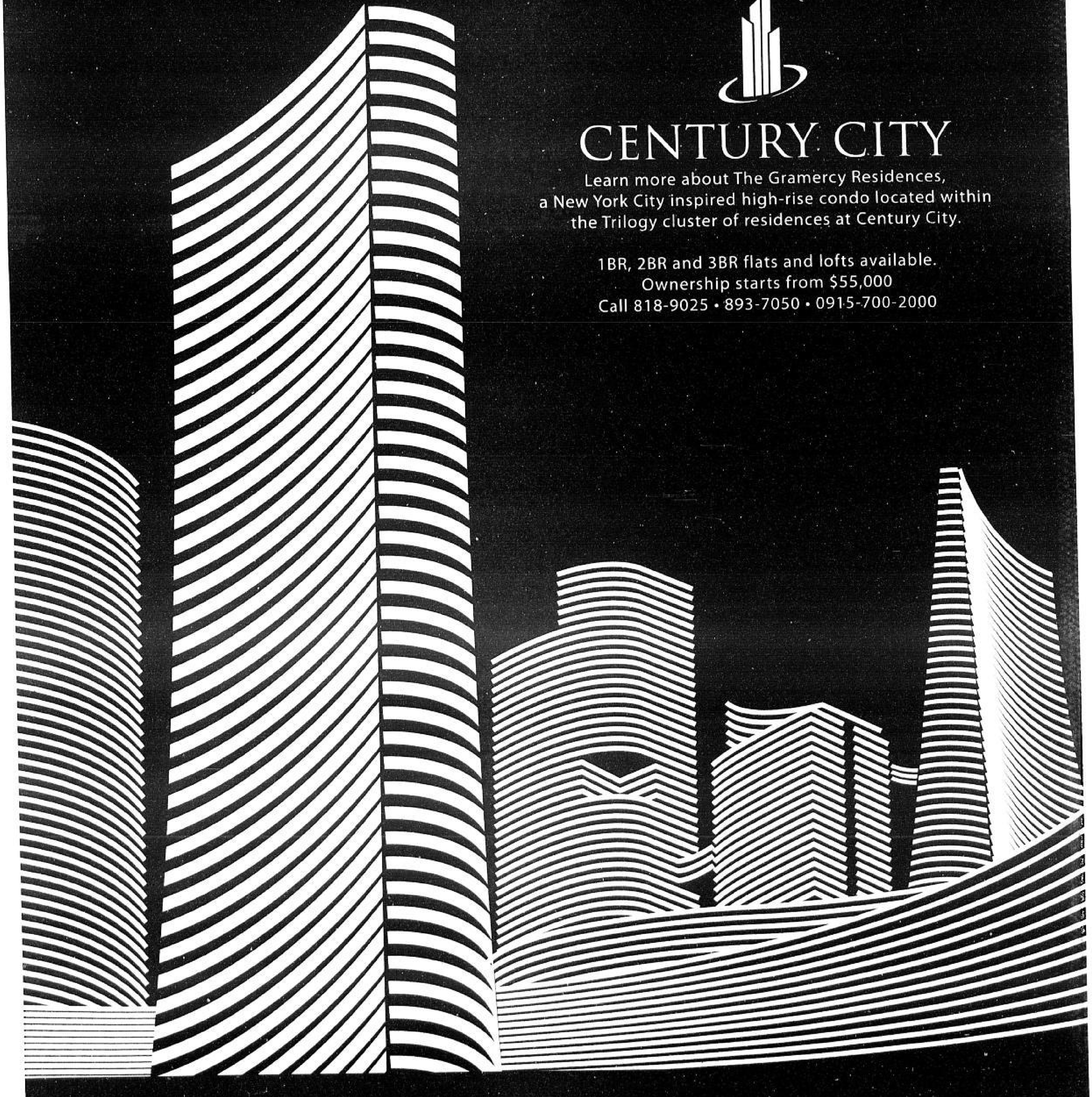

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Palace order seen hampering development of indigenous oil

Group says EO 556 turns off prospective investors

By Abigail L. Ho

AN EXECUTIVE ORDER REMOVING Philippine National Oil Co.'s authority to enter into contracts for the exploration and development of the Camago-Malampaya oil leg is hampering the entry of new investors into the country's upstream oil industry, according to the Petroleum Association of the Philippines.

In a letter to Energy Secretary Raphael Lotilla, Petroleum Association chair Alfredo Ramos expressed "grave concern" over certain provisions of EO 556 which might negate efforts to reinvigorate the upstream oil industry in the country.

"Our members reported that the feedback from the international oil exploration sector was unfavorable due to certain interpretations of the executive order," Ramos said.

He said the impression conveyed by EO 556 to some major upstream oil companies was that there was no stability of contracts with the government, and that in the Philippines, agreements could be cancelled by the issuance of executive orders such as EO 556.

EO 556 states that no government agency, including the PNOC, can award farm-in or farm-out contracts to any entity, including those for the exploration, development and production of oil from the Malampaya oil reserves.

The order also stated that "any and all negotiations or arrangements entered into by any government agency, including the PNOC, which violate this executive order, shall be immediately discontinued or cancelled."

"Because of the cloud of doubt brought about by this executive order, our members have found it very difficult to invite prospective partners in their own exploration ventures and in the bidding for petroleum contract areas in the ongoing (Philippine Energy Contracting Round 2006)," Ramos said.

He said the high-risk and capital-intensive nature of the petroleum exploration business required companies to pursue risk-reduction measures by farming out interests to other parties.

Sans such alliances, he said the development of the country's indigenous oil resources would be severely constrained.

"It is, therefore, not only PNOC and government agencies that are affected by certain provisions of the executive order. It is not only the upstream oil industry that would be affected, for the issues raised are more far reaching," he said.

Should questions on the stability of contracts persist, he said there could be adverse effects on the whole socio-economic development program of the government.

"Higher political risk results in eventually higher costs to the constituency of the Philippines," he added.

PNOC was earlier questioned for allegedly entering into a farm-in agreement with Mitra Energy Ltd. without going through transparent procedures and even bypassing a local group that also wanted to develop the Malampaya oil reserves.

This prompted the issuance of EO 556 and the establishment of the task force in charge of formulating the specific bidding rules and procedures for the oil rim.

These guidelines have yet to be finalized.

US firm tapped to do Century City blueprint

CALIFORNIA-BASED JERDE Partnership International has been tapped by Century Properties to do the master plan for Century City, a P40-billion integrated mixed-use complex to rise on a Makati property formerly occupied by the International School Manila.

The architecture and urban planning firm will be part of the creative team that will build Century City.

Ambassador Jose E. B. Antonio, chair of Century Properties, said the project was envisioned to become a world-class destination like the other multi-million-dollar Jerde-designed global landmarks— the Bellagio Hotel in Las Vegas, the Roppongi Hills in Tokyo and the soon-to-rise City of Dreams in Macau.

Century City will contain the first Philippine Economic Zone Authority information-technology (IT) park in Makati. About 160, 000 sq.m. of Grade A offices will be made available to BPO locators and other multinational companies.

According to its developers, Century City will go beyond the usual design and structure of typical integrated cities.

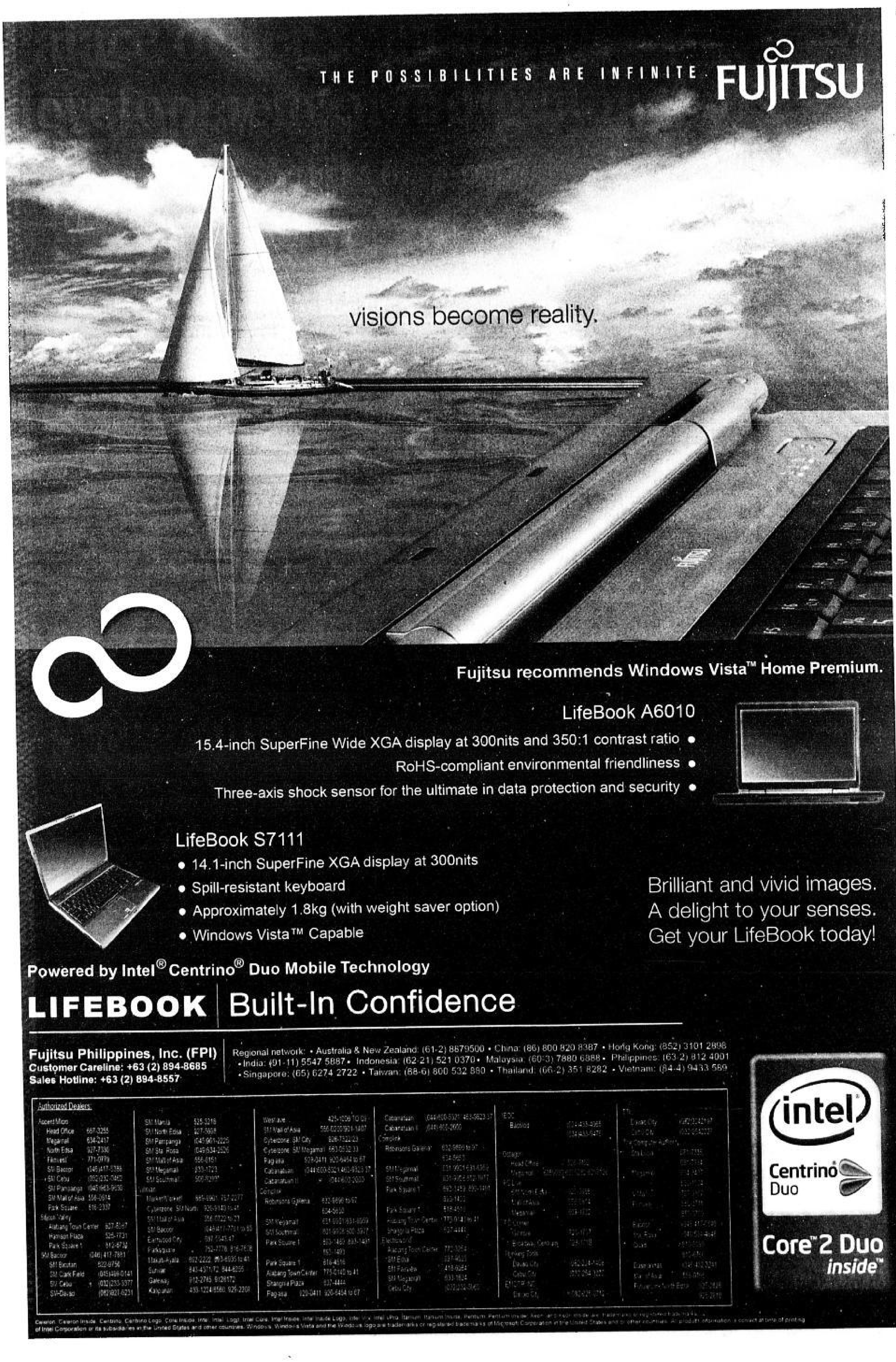
It will be an "organic future city that fuses nature and technology with exclusive luxury residences, Grade A offices in vertical state-of-the-art corporate complex, a resort-style country club, a designer-branded luxury hotel, and a sprawling shopping dining, and entertainment complex," Antonio said.

The retail component will be an organic glassed-in complex that will connect to the living and working components of the urban ecosystem. The architecture will be inspired by nature's blueprint.

"This new development will reshape Makati's Skyline," said Jon Jerde, founder and CEO of the Jerde Partnership International.

The Century Properties-led consortium acquired the property through a bidding in February last year for P1.43 billion. The other members of the consortium are Singapore-based Crescent Group and Picar Holdings.

The project's groundbreaking is scheduled for the second quarter, with the first office building expected to be completed in 2009.



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Thinner trading

From page B1

of Rizal Commercial Banking Corp. and International Container Terminal Services Inc., brokers said.

"Given the lack of appetite going toward the long Lenten holidays, expect volumes to be light and lethargic (this) week and in the first week of April. While it is a season primarily to reassess one's spirituality, it will give investors a chance to recharge themselves physically after the draining market ups and downs the last three months," AB Capital Securities wrote in its weekly report.

RCBC is offering 182.6 million new and previously owned shares at P27 each to raise P4.93 billion in gross proceeds. Listing date of the shares is on March 29.

ICTSI Warehousing Inc. (IWI) has also sold 261 million shares of listed firm International Container Terminal Services Inc. at P 26.25 per share. ICTSI said the sale was crossed at the Philippine Stock Exchange on Thursday.

"We expect the market to have upward bias as recent follow-on offerings of RCBC and ICTSI were oversubscribed. Looks like the bulls are coming back and buying stocks," Paul Joseph Garcia, of ING Investment Management said.

Conrado Bate, president at Citiseconline.com said the market would continue to trade at a range of 3,100 to 3,200 as investors await developments from overseas. *Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson*

Metro Pacific ...

From page B1

meet its principal debts but paid interest on the loans until December 2005. In that year, MDI obtained confirmation letters from its local lenders for a moratorium on its principal repayments. As of June last year, MDI has not received default notices from its creditor banks.

As of Sept. 30 last year, the company registered a net income of P119.1 million.

Makati Med chair Manuel Pangilinan earlier said the hospital was likely to have posted a sharp growth in net income last year to P160 million, from P26 million the previous year, as the hospital cut costs.

Pag-IBIG OKs ...

From page B3

flotation, will help finance the acquisition of some 50,000 housing units worth an average of P500,000 each.

At yearend 2006, Pag-IBIG Fund's total assets amounted to P191.55 billion, up by 7.43 percent from P178.3 billion a year ago. The P7.7-billion net income posted last year was also a record high for the fund.

No free lunch ...

From page B2

Asean neighbors.

One thing is common to all such cases of regulatory dysfunction: The interests of a few are promoted at the expense of the wide majority of the people. One wonders how this could persist in a supposedly democratic society as the Philippines. But for as long as the system facilitates turning economic power into political power and vice versa, this perverse reality will continue to be with us for time to come.

Comments are welcome at chabito@ateneo.edu
]

APC Group seeks partners for energy ventures

Firm to forge farm-in deals for Service Contract 48

By Abigail L. Ho

LISTED FIRM APC GROUP INC., through subsidiary Aragorn Power and Energy Corp. (Apec), is keen on forming partnerships with foreign firms for the development of its petroleum service contract in the Cagayan Basin.

In an interview with the INQUIRER, APC chair and president Willy Ocier said that by the second half, Apec would concentrate on forging farm-in agreements for Service Contract 48.

"We'll talk with foreign firms to help us develop the contract. We can retain a 5-percent share and just get royalties," he said.

SC 48, which was awarded to Apec by the Department of Energy on Feb. 22, 2005, covers 748,000 hectares of land in the Cagayan Basin.

According to the company's official website, the Cagayan Basin has been previously explored by Podco, Stanvac, Philodrill Corp., PNOC Exploration Corp., South China Petroleum Resources and Alsons Resources.

"Numerous oil and gas seeps occur in the basin and of the 32 wells drilled there, 15 had varying degrees of oil and/or gas shows," the Apec site stated. "Four wells actually flowed gas to surface and one is presently producing one million cubic feet of gas per day to power a 3-megawatt (MW) generation plant."

The power plant is owned and operated by PNOC-EC.

The DOE's Norwegian-sponsored Philippine Petroleum Resource Assessment project said the basin was estimated to have a petroleum resource potential of 400 million barrels of oil equivalent.

To develop SC 48, Ocier said Apec would need "substantial amounts of investments," which made getting foreign partners the most practical thing for the company to do.

Apart from the petroleum block, he said Apec would also want to develop geothermal resources in Northern Luzon.

It has also filed applications with the DOE for two geothermal sites in the Cordilleras.

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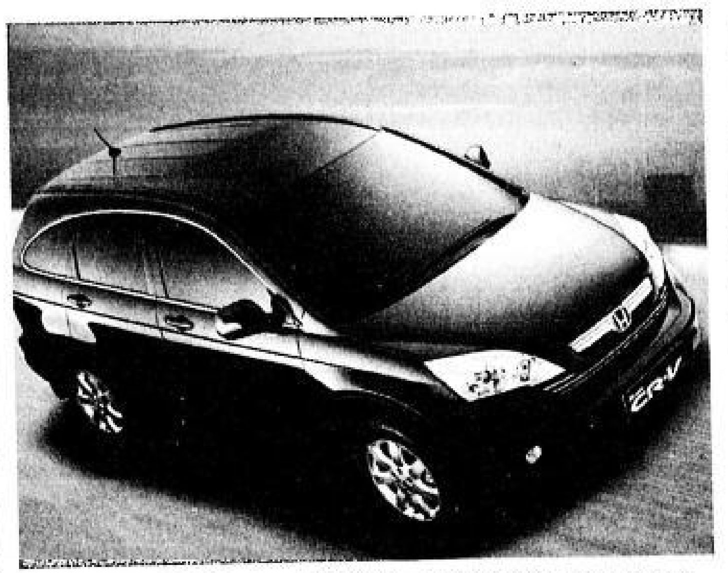
PELAC Dollar Bond Fund	1.2693	1.2649
PELAC Global Bond Fund	1.1842	1.1815
PELAC Peso Fixed Income Fund	0.9863	0.9990
PELAC Peso Equity Fund	1.2147	1.1853

These investment funds are specific to variable life insurance contracts and are not considered mutual funds. Life insurance products are regulated by the Insurance Commission.

*Fund prices are net of transaction costs



INTRODUCTORY prices: P1.19M for 2-liter MT; P1.25M for 2-liter AT and P1.45M for 2.4-liter AT

'07 CR-V seen boosting Honda market share

By Ronnel W. Domingo

HONDA CARS PHILIPPINES Inc. launched last Saturday the third-generation CR-V which, company officials said, would strengthen the company's position in the crossover sports utility vehicle segment of the market.

Takashi Sekiguchi, HCPI president and general manager, said during the launch that the 2007 CR-V was hoped to boost sales to 250 units a month from last year's average of 180 units a month.

In a separate interview, HCPI vice president Arnel Doria said the new model would be introduced at P1.19 million for the 2-liter manual variant and P1.25 million for the 2-liter two-wheel drive automatic.

A third variant, the 2.4-liter, four-wheel drive automatic, would go for P1.45 million.

"The all new CR-V is redesigned to live up to the prestige that sets this Honda SUV apart from the others, offering practicality, car-like driving dynamics and designing," Sekiguchi said.

The new CR-V comes with dual SRS, side airbag and Occupant Position Detection System that detects weight, height and position of the front passenger to decide whether to deploy the airbags.

The vehicle also uses G-Force Control technology that "provides survival zone for inevitable crash accidents.

The CR-V was first introduced in the Philippines in 1997 two years after its global debut. Local assembly started in 1998.

Honda records show that since the start, at least 36,000 CR-Vs have been sold in the country.

The second-generation CR-V came out in 2002, packaged as "the comfortable and practical sedan in a small SUV."

The newest CR-V is shipped completely built from Thailand, but Honda would continue assembly of the Civic and City passenger cars in its facility in Laguna.

Metrobank moves to win more Japanese clients

By Doris C. Dumlao

METROPOLITAN BANK AND Trust Co. has beefed up its Japan desk to take advantage of robust demand for banking services among Japanese companies operating in the country.

In a press statement, Metrobank executive vice president Vicente Cuna Jr. said a Japanese national from SMBC Metro Investment Corp., Satoshi Izumiya, would be seconded to head the Japan desk.

Izumiya has been with SMBC Metro, an affiliate of Metrobank and Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corp., is a seasoned banker with 20 years of international banking experience with SMBC.

The move is in line with Metrobank's thrust to increase its market share and solidify its presence across various customer segments and industries, including the growing Japanese business community.

"This partnership allows us to deepen our relationship with existing Japanese clients and offer our services to new ones," said Cuna.

He noted that Japanese business in the Philippines had grown steadily over the years, with over 800 companies now in operation.

He said Japanese companies in the Philippines were into manufacturing, logistics, nonlife insurance, IT and software development, and recently, business process outsourcing.

Japanese manufacturing firms account for at least 80 percent of the number of locators in export processing zones in the country.

Cuna said the bank was looking at doubling Metrobank's current market share by offering a full range of products including peso, yen, and/or US dollar financing and transaction banking to Japanese firms.

IPVG, HK firm OK joint venture

IP-CONTACT CENter Outsourcing Inc., a subsidiary of IPVG Corp., and CW Teleservices (Hong Kong) Ltd. will jointly operate and manage a contact center in the Philippines.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange, IPVG said its subsidiary and the Hong Kong firm had "finalized a term sheet" on this venture.

PCCW Teleservices is a wholly owned subsidiary of PCCW Limited of Hong Kong.

"The parties will work together to generate business, set up facilities, manage operations and transfer knowledge base to the contact center in the Philippines," IPVG said.

Under the terms agreed, PCCW Teleservices will provide expertise in contact center and CRM operations, while IPCCO will be in charge of local recruitment and training, as well as the operation and maintenance of the physical facilities.

The joint venture would enable PCCW Teleservices to extend its contact center and telecommunications solutions in the Philippines to service North American clients, IPVG said. *Riza T. Olchondra*

Online games publisher shifts to Microsoft platform

TO ADDRESS THE EVER-changing needs of the online gaming industry, Level Up! Games, the leading online game publisher in the country, is optimizing its IT operations to provide a full suite of game titles that fit a wide range of player types.

Christopher Syling, chief technology officer of Level Up! Games Inc., said the firm would publish several more game titles and online content in the coming months.

Level Up! aims to bring online computer gaming and its communities to greater heights, through the introduction of Massively Multiplayer Online Games (MMOGs). These games will allow individuals from all over the country to interact in dynamic, virtual communities. Currently, Level Up! offers nine game titles to the ever growing gaming community. Some of which are Ragnarok Online, Flyff, R.F. Online and Pangya.

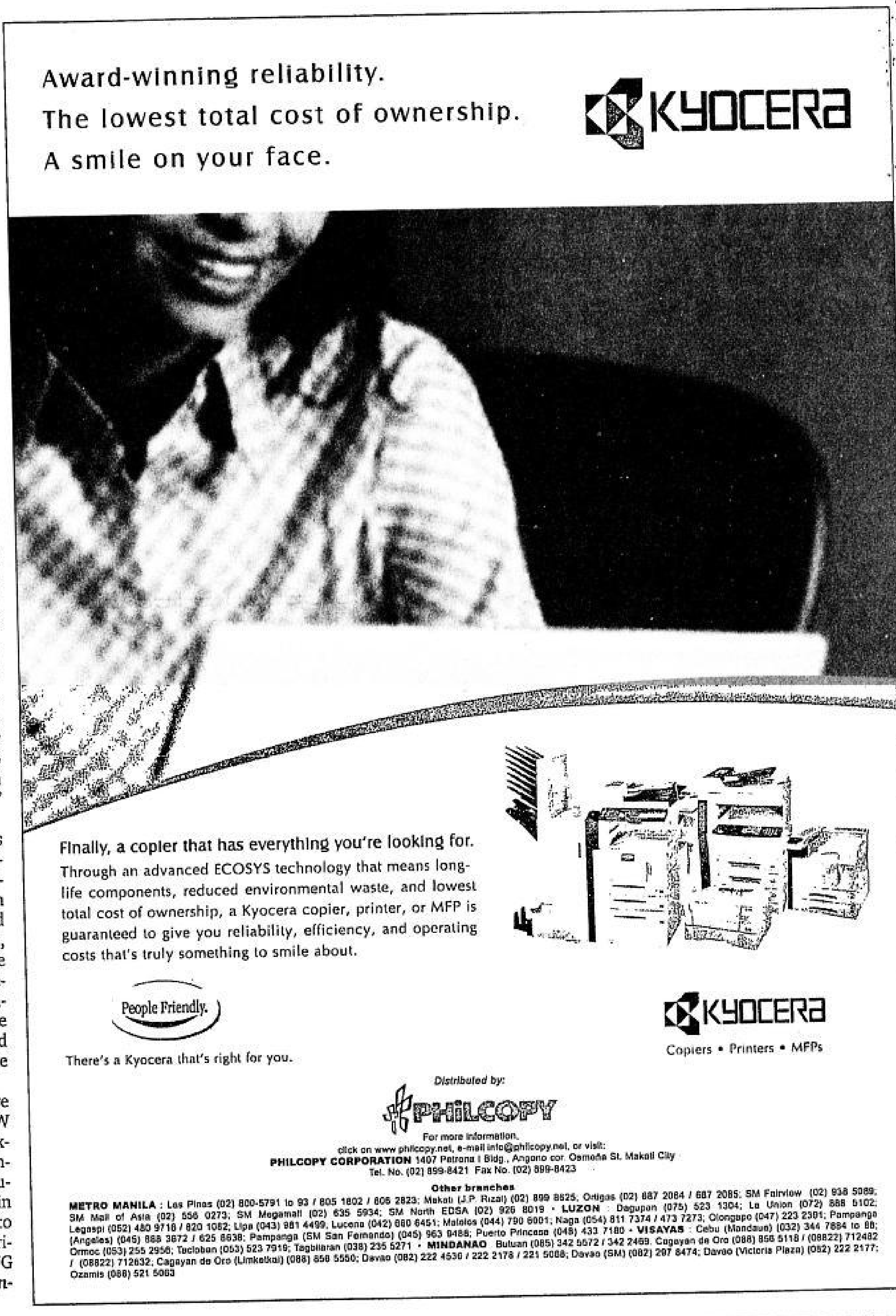
"With this plan, having a consistent platform that can address the needs of multiple games and multiple developers is essential," Syling said

Level Up! decided to move its platform from open source to Microsoft in response to the needs of the company to stay competitive. Its migration to the Microsoft platform will fully take place in the coming months.

"We believe the Microsoft platform will allow our company to minimize operational expenses and increase productivity," said Syling.

"Microsoft's development tools as well as its off the shelf products allow us time to market our services thereby strengthening our place in the industry," he added.

The Microsoft platform includes a Web service-connected IT architecture; servers to host Web services; development tools to create them; applications to use them, and a worldwide network of more than 35,000 Microsoft certified partner organizations to provide any help a company needs.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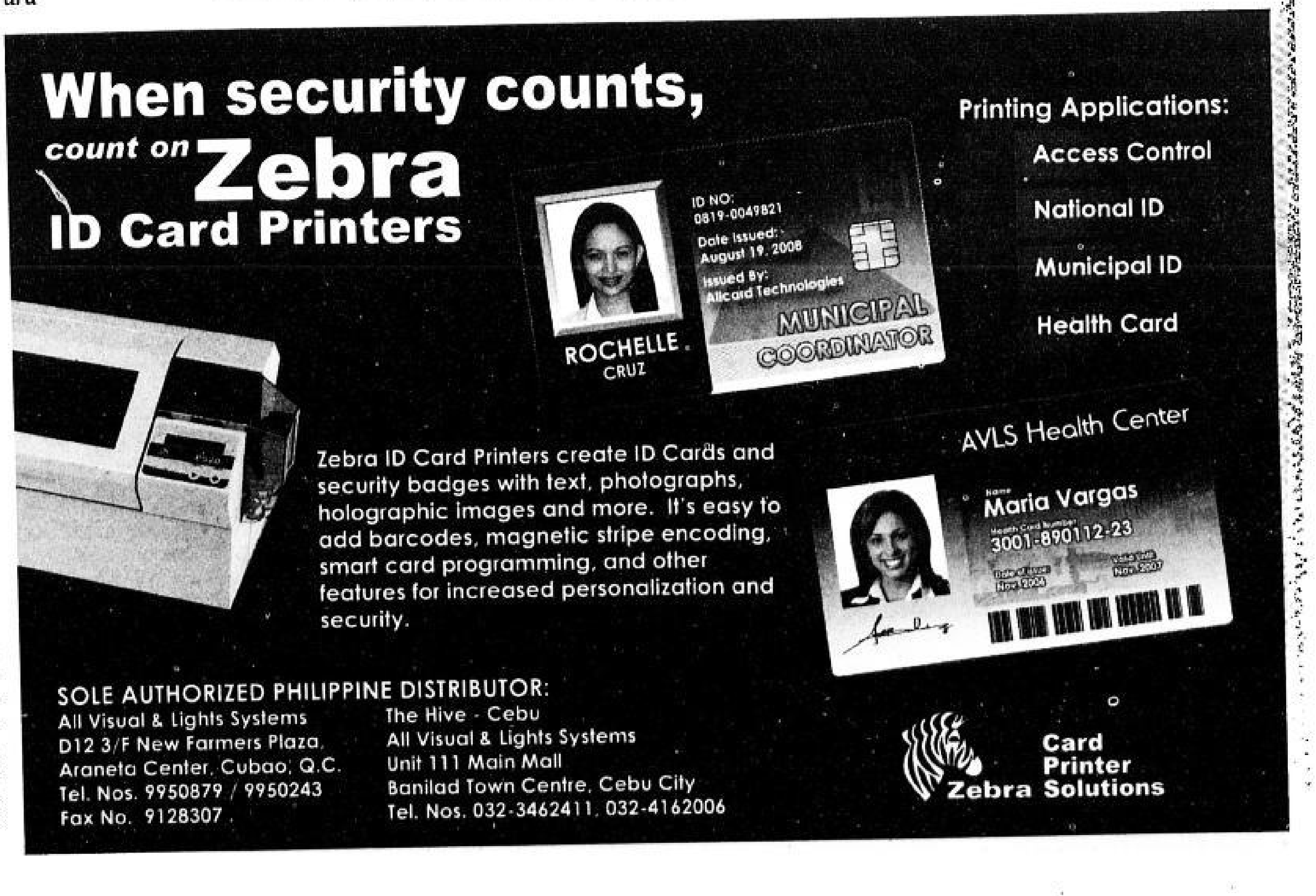
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'Sachet' method eyed in spreading computer use

Piecemeal scheme to market goods, services may boost Internet access

By Abigail L. Ho

THE FILIPINOS' SUCCESS IN USING the "sachet" method to market almost everything—from vinegar and rice to mobile phone load—can also be used to spread the use of computers in the country, according to a local entrepreneur.

RFM Corp. president Jose Concepcion III, who is also presidential consultant on entrepreneurship, said using the sachet method to provide more Filipinos with access to computers should not be any different from how that marketing strategy worked to propel the success of neighborhood *sari-sari* (convenience) stores.

Under the scheme, goods and services are sold piecemeal to make them affordable to a greater number of people.

"We should sachet the use of computers," he said in a recent speech before Internet industry stakeholders. "We've been successful in 'sacheting' in the brick-and-mortar business. We need to push more computers out."

He said the success of mobile operators in promoting the use of cellular phones could also be true for computers, given the right strategies.

"I can't wait to see computers being offered for free, just like cellular phones," he said.

While there is a growing number of Internet-savvy individuals in the country, the Philippines still has one of the lowest computer and Internet penetration rates in Asia and the world.

According to DigitalFilipino.com, the number of computers in households, businesses, Internet cafés, schools and government offices numbered only 2 million by end-2005, based on vendor estimates.

With a population of more than 87 million, this represented a penetration rate of less than 3 percent.

In terms of Internet penetration, the Computer Industry Almanac stated that as of end-2006, only about 9 percent of the population had access to the Internet, including those who accessed the worldwide Web via Internet cafés.

On the flipside, mobile phone penetration had breached the 50-percent mark, with 45 million of the country's population now wielding cellular phones.

Concepcion said that if the strategies adopted by mobile operators could be channeled to the computer and Internet industries, more Filipinos would be able to take advantage of the power of technology.

Science museum to rise on former military base

By Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

THE AYALA GROUP WILL BE PUTTING up a science museum at the Bonifacio Global City, to bring to it a measure of art and culture.

Officials said during the launch of Bonifacio High Street late last week that the science museum, which is still in the early planning stages, will be located across the group's upscale Bonifacio High Street development—a kilometer-long strip of chic shops and restaurants a stone's throw away from The Fort and Market! Market!

Ayala Land Inc. chair Fernando Zobel de Ayala said the science museum will cater to children and promises to be "experimental, exploratory and very interactive."

"What we want is to give (the children) a whole new experience," Ayala Land president Jaime Ayala said. "In any great city, you have different elements. In the Philippines, we feel that there ought to be more museums, or structures that cater to arts and sciences, which are all marks of a great city."

True to its promise to shoppers of the Fort Bonifacio Global City, the Ayala-controlled Fort Bonifacio Development Corp. launched last week Bonifacio High Street, a 36-hectare sprawl of green landscape that encompasses Ayala Land's residential project Serendra and Third Avenue.

The concept of Bonifacio High Street is comparable to leisurely stroll in trendy Soho in New York, Lincoln Road in Miami, Santana Row in San Jose, Third Street Promenade in Sta. Monica, Rodeo Drive and The Grove in Los Angeles.

Stunning sculptures made by acclaimed Filipino artists Reg Yuson, Conrado Velasco and Ronald Achacoso punctuate the boulevard's unique ambiance.

FBDC earlier said that as much as P8 billion will be spent on Bonifacio Global City over the next five years.

Ayala Land Inc. and Evergreen Holdings of the Campos group acquired majority of Bonifacio Land Corp. from Metro Pacific in 2003 and are now the partners of the government in FBDC.

Under the new plan, more than a hundred buildings will rise in the area, some of which are in the planning stage or under construction.

This will include 159,000 sq.m. of office space, a million square meters of residential space, 305,000 sq.m. of commercial and retail space and 212,000 sq.m. for institutional locators like schools and hospitals.

WARM WELCOME
Eduardo Jarque Jr. (left), Tourism undersecretary for planning and promotions, welcomes Guan Jin, director of the Shanghai Jinyu Air Service Pty. Ltd. Ms Jin is a member of a Chinese delegation composed of top airline and travel agency representatives from Shanghai. The group flew into the country to study the possibility of opening an air corridor between Shanghai and Cebu to accommodate the growing number of visitors from China. The members met their local counterparts during a familiarization tour of Manila, Cebu and Bohol.

IFC sizes up ease of doing business at LGU level

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE INTERNATIONAL FINANCE CORP. WILL start to rate the ease of doing business at the local government level, hoping to arrive at a benchmark, in order to enhance the environment for micro, small and medium enterprises in the country.

Jesse Ang, acting IFC country manager for the Philippines and Thailand, said in a recent report that the benchmarking of business regulation procedures at the sub-national level would "institutionalize an accountability mechanism" and "create demand for reform by publicizing rankings."

Ang said the IFC had already mapped out 5 cities across the Philippines, determining the time and cost of business registration.

"The results have been presented to a number of stakeholders who have commented on the innovative nature of this approach," Ang said.

This is part of the multilateral lender's support for the SME working group, led by the Department of Trade and Industry, which is developing an action plan to develop business registration and consequently encourage the opening up of businesses.

"Micro, small and medium enterprises comprise 97 percent of the total number of businesses, and yet they account for only 34 percent value added to the economy which compares poorly with the regional average of 0 percent," Ang said.

Ang said IFC was also working with the governments of Australia and Canada to focus on areas of concern affecting SMEs. Among the areas are: Increasing access to finance, improving the business enabling environment and infrastructure support.

IFC, the private sector financing arm of the World Bank, has institutionalized an annual global benchmarking survey on the ease of doing business that ranks countries. The Philippines' poor ranking in these surveys has prompted the government to work harder on a national competitiveness agenda.

Price of ICTSI's secondary share offering set at ₱26.25 apiece

By Riza T. Olchondra

PORT OPERATOR INTERNATIONAL Container Terminal Services Inc. (ICTSI) will be conducting a secondary share offering with the minimum share price set at P26.25 apiece.

In its report to the Philippine Stock Exchange last week, ICTSI said it had also secured the Philippine Securities and Exchange Commission's permission to allow underwriter UBS AG to bear the risks of its secondary share offer.

ICTSI and its subsidiary, ICTSI Warehousing Inc. (IWI), have completed their international road show in connection with IWI's secondary sale of up to 261 million ICTSI common shares, with an over-allotment option of up to 39 million shares.

The parent company fixed the price of its secondary offer at P26.25 per share, translating to a possible P7.87 billion in total proceeds.

"At this share price, the gross selling price of the shares is P6.851 billion, plus an additional amount of P1.023 billion if the underwriters exercise their over-allotment option (to sell up to 39 million shares)," ICTSI said. "The gross amounts are before underwriting commissions, and other expenses relating to this transaction."

The proceeds will go to the parent company, which will be used to fund additional acquisitions of terminals abroad. Currently, ICTSI manages ports in China, Madagascar, Poland, Brazil, Syria and Japan.

In an order dated March 22, the SEC Market Regulation Department had set the guidelines for the price stabilization activities.

The SEC said UBS AG shall be the only manager for the stabilization activities. The stabilization manager may only buy or offer to buy the shares when its price starts falling below the pegged amount of P26.25 per share in order to allow the share price to drop "in an orderly fashion" to a market-accepted level.

The SEC also said the over-allotment amount shall not exceed 39 million common shares of ICTSI.

In Japan, RP beauty products expected to make a splash

By Ronnel W. Domingo

A JAPANESE HEALTH AND WELLNESS EXPERT is urging local personal care companies to firm up their presence in Japan, especially those whose products include indigenous ingredients.

According to the Center for International Trade Expositions and Missions, Yokohama-based Wakaba Nishida recently visited the country to hold a seminar on the intricacies of the Japanese personal care market.

Trade Assistant Secretary Felicitas Agoncilio-Reyes said Nishida, who is an advocate of natural therapy, encouraged in particular local firms that make products with indigenous material like *tawas*, *lawat*, *gugo* and calamansi, as well as those who make virgin coconut oil (VCO).

"The Philippines, with its wealth of indigenous ingredients, is well positioned to take advantage of market opportunities in Japan," Reyes said.

She said the country has the potential to become the prime source of personal care products and all that was needed was a push.

Included in Nishida's lectures were labelling information, shipment processes and packaging standards.

Nishida, whose Oriental Ayus Spa chain in Japan specializes in traditional medicine like India's Ayurveda, also visited production sites of VCO, wart and mole removers, natural cashew-based hair and beauty care products, and flavored herbal teas.

Nishida established Ayus Inc. in Yokohama after running her own spa for a decade. She was here during the National Trade Fair held earlier this month.

Reyes said the most promising local product was the VCO, which is "enjoying wide market acceptance" as ingredient for cosmetic and personal care products like soap, lotions, massage oils, beauty creams and shampoos.

She cited figures from the Philippine Coconut Authority, which showed that VCO exports ballooned from 1.8 metric tons in 2001 to 475 metric tons in 2005 or some $1.6 million in sales.

Currently, the United States gets the lion's share of VCO exports with some 94 percent of total shipments.

"Australia and Canada are also clamoring for supply," Reyes said. "Soon, maybe Japan will be wanting deliveries, too."

She said the demand for organic and natural care products in the world market—already at $125 billion a year—was expected to grow 34 percent in Europe, 30 percent in the United States and 18 percent in Japan.

PROPERTIES FOR SALE

MAKATI
LOT 1 CONDO-RSDL
Floor Area: 35.72 sqm.
Unit 2106 Oxford Suites, P. Burgos
Minimum Bid Price: 1,806,250

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LOT 2 LOT W/ IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 1,655 sqm.
Floor Area: 4,265 / 1,382 sqm.
Lepanto cor. P. Paredes St., Sampaloc
Minimum Bid Price: 64,434,000

LOT 3 LOT W/ IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 90.20 sqm.
No. 1207 Narciso St., Pandacan
Minimum Bid Price: 821,100

LOT 4 LOT W/ IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 208.30 sqm.
Antipolo cor. Natividad Sts., Sta. Cruz
Minimum Bid Price: 3,499,300

MARIKINA
LOT 5 LOT W/ IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 420 sqm.
Floor Area: 419 sqm.
No. 54 President E. Aguinaldo Street, Industrial Valley Subd.
Minimum Bid Price: 9,000,000

PASAY
LOT 6 CONDO-RSDL
Floor Area: 109.08 sqm.
Unit 2603 Balagtas Royale Mansion, Balagtas St.
Minimum Bid Price: 2,358,750

LOT 7 CONDO-RSDL
Floor Area: 74.03 sqm.
Unit 2607 Balagtas Royale Mansion, Balagtas St.
Minimum Bid Price: 1,593,750

LOT 8 CONDO-RSDL
Floor Area: 74.44 sqm.
Unit 504 Somerset Tower I Leveriza St.
Minimum Bid Price: 1,593,750

LOT 9 CONDO-RSDL
Floor Area: 63.04 sqm.
Unit 1401 Somerset Tower II Leveriza St.
Minimum Bid Price: 1,338,750

QUEZON CITY
LOT 10 LOT ONLY
Lot Area: 775.70 sqm.
Lot 9 Blk 99 Maningning St., Sikatuna Village
Minimum Bid Price: 8,920,500

LOT 11 TOWNHOUSE
Lot Area: 82.50 sqm.
Floor Area: 220 sqm.
No. 320 Victoria Village, Finance St., Proj. 8
Minimum Bid Price: 4,800,000

LOT 12 LOT ONLY
Lot Area: 496 sqm.
Lot 23 Blk 10 Quirino Highway cor. Genesis St. Sacred Heart Village, Novaliches
Minimum Bid Price: 5,000,000

RIZAL
LOT 13 LOT ONLY
Lot Area: 1,737 sqm.
Circumferential Road, Poblacion, Antipolo City
Minimum Bid Price: 7,295,400

LOT 14 LOT ONLY
Lot Area: 604 sqm.
Delaware St., Palos Verdes Subd., Sta. Cruz, Antipolo City
Minimum Bid Price: 1,479,800

LOT 15 LOT ONLY
Lot Area: 764 sqm.
Indiana St., Palos Verdes Subd., Sta. Cruz, Antipolo City
Minimum Bid Price: 1,871,800

LOT 16 LOT ONLY
Lot Area: 223 sqm.
Lot 4 Blk 4 Athena St., Crestview Subd., Antipolo
Minimum Bid Price: 889,700

LOT 17 LOT ONLY
Lot Area: 1,056 sqm.
Lot 27 Blk 10 Forest Hills Subd., San Juan, Antipolo
Minimum Bid Price: 2,325,000

BULACAN
LOT 18 LOT W/ IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 513+5,029+458 sqm.
No. 11 Putol St., Brgy. Bulac, Sta. Maria
Minimum Bid Price: 3,600,000

CAVITE
LOT 19 LOT ONLY
Lot Area: 1,435 sqm.
Lot 44 Blk 1 Mira Hills Subd., Puerto Azul, Golf Resort and Country Club, Ternate
Minimum Bid Price: 2,870,000

ISABELA
LOT 20 LOT ONLY
Lot Area: 5,400 sqm.
Lot 2-A-2 Bo. Dadap, Cauayan
Minimum Bid Price: 2,700,000

LAGUNA
LOT 21 LOT W/ IMPRVMNT
(Fully Furnished)
Lot Area: 67 sqm.
Floor Area: 120 sqm.
No. 329 Purok Tres, Pansol, Los Banos
Minimum Bid Price: 2,500,000

LOT 22 LOT ONLY
Lot Area: 846 sqm.
Lot 1 Blk 2 (Belle Reve Ave. cor. Spruce St.) Belle Reve Subd., Sta. Rosa
Minimum Bid Price: 5,076,000

LOT 23 LOT ONLY
Lot Area: 3,918 sqm.
Lot 2386-B, Brgy. Samsim, Calamba
Minimum Bid Price: 3,402,000

LOT 24 LOT W/ IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 5,360 sqm.
Lot 2-A, 2-B, 2-C Bo. Tatalon, Cabuyao
Minimum Bid Price: 8,777,600

QUEZON
LOT 25 LOT ONLY
Lot Area: 1,800 sqm.
Lot 4950-A, Quezon Ave., Brgy. Cotta, Lucena
Minimum Bid Price: 10,620,000

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CALOOCAN
BTP 1 LOT W/ IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 2,483 sqm.
No. 187 Gen. Simon St.
Minimum Bid Price: 29,796,000

MALABON
BTP 2 LOT W/ IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 2,370 sqm.
No. 10 Orange St. cor. Anonas St.
Minimum Bid Price: 28,815,000

MANILA
BTP 3 LOT W/ IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 1,728.55 sqm.
No. 990 Quezon Blvd. cor. Alley, Sampaloc
Minimum Bid Price: 39,929,400

MUNTINLUPA
BTP 4 LOT ONLY
Lot Area: 1,524 sqm.
Lot 3 Blk 1 Singapura Lane & Spectrum Midway, Filinvest Corp. City, Alabang
Minimum Bid Price: BEST OFFER

BTP 5 LOT ONLY
Lot Area: 3,166 sqm.
Lots 1 & 2 (Ph 1, Blk 10) Asean Drive, Filinvest Corp. City, Alabang
Minimum Bid Price: 202,500,000

PASIG CITY
BTP 6 OFFICE BUILDING
Lot Area: 1,290 sqm.
Floor Area 2,590 sqm.
LM Building, Marcos Highway, Dela Paz
Minimum Bid Price: BEST OFFER

QUEZON CITY
BTP 7 LOT W/ IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 1,558 sqm.
Floor Area 440+511+140+51 sqm.
No. 41 14th St., New Manila
Minimum Bid Price: 26,133,000

BTP 8 LOT W/ IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 1,535 sqm.
E. Rodriguez Sr. Ave., New Manila
Minimum Bid Price: 40,293,750

BULACAN
BTP 9 LOT ONLY
Lot Area: 39,811 sqm.
Sta. Maria Industrial Park, Sta. Maria
Minimum Bid Price: BEST OFFER

CAGAYAN DE ORO
BTP 10 LOT ONLY
Lot Area: 46,774 sqm.
Lot 3-A, Lumbia
Minimum Bid Price: 16,400,000

CAVITE
BTP 11 LOT ONLY
Lot Area: various
Lots 7406-A, 7406-B, 7406-C Paliparan I, Dasmariñas
Minimum Bid Price: 28,249,000

DAVAO
BTP 12 LOT W/ IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 5,000 sqm.
Floor Area: 1,060+240+230 sqm.
Cabaguio Avenue
Minimum Bid Price: 46,470,000

ISABELA
BTP 13 LOT W/ IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 3,000 sqm.
Floor Area: 900+200 sqm.
M. Roxas Extension cor. Romulo Bucag St., Bo. Poblacion, Cauayan
Minimum Bid Price: 30,000,000

LAGUNA
BTP 14 LOT W/ IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: various
Lots 2,3 & 7 (Ever Electrical Mfg. Plant) Bo. Makiling, Calamba
Minimum Bid Price: 113,238,000

NUEVA ECIJA
BTP 15 AGRI LOT
Lot Area: 56 ha.
Provincial Highway, Cabaongan, Nampicuan
Minimum Bid Price: 84,000,000

BTP 16 AGRI LOT
Lot Area: 27 ha.
Int. Provincial Highway, Cabaongan, Nampicuan
Minimum Bid Price: 37,800,000

BTP 17 AGRI LOT
Lot Area: 16 ha.
Alzate St., Brgy. Estacion, Cabaongan, Nampicuan
Minimum Bid Price: 36,000,000

MINDORO
BTP 18 BEACH PROPERTY
Lot Area: 127 ha.
Mansiol Point, Mansalay
Minimum Bid Price: 553,700,000

QUEZON
BTP 19 LOT W/ IMPRVMNT
Lot Area: 25,427 sqm.
Lot 2371-E-2-A Brgy. Talisan Aplaya, Sariaya
Minimum Bid Price: 16,500,000

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Election spending may spur trade in '07

By Riza T. Olchondra

BUSINESSES ARE EXPECTED TO receive a boost this year because of heightened spending during the election season, coupled with the general improvement in the economy.

This is the perception of businessmen who attended last week's banquet of the Entrepreneur of the Year (Philippines) awards.

Food is good

"It is a good year because it is an election year," said Tony Tan Caktiong, Jollibee Foods Corp. chair and CEO who was World Entrepreneur of the Year in 2004. "There is a lot of spending and this is good for all industries."

The country's largest fast food chain operator reported a net income of P2.146 billion in 2006, up 20 percent from P1.69 billion in 2005.

System wide sales, which include sales from company-owned and franchised stores, reached P45.206 billion, up 13.5 percent from P39.829 billion in 2005.

"We are pleased with the strong performance of all our brands in practically every market where we do business; in the Philippines and abroad," Tan Caktiong said.

As of Dec. 31, the company was operating a total of 1,357 stores in the Philippines. It had 566 stores of the Jollibee brand, 355 of Chowking, 240 of Greenwich, 159 of Red Ribbon and 37 of Delifrance. It had 170 stores abroad. Of the 170, 105 are Yonghe King outlets which were acquired in China in 2004.

Another successful food retail chain, The French Baker, expects the general improvement in the economy, and government efforts to promote goodwill between investors and consumers, to bear fruit this year.

"We (entrepreneurs) are not afraid of investing anymore," CEO and president Johnlu Koa said.

Koa said The French Baker will spend P50 million to open five new stores, most of them in Luzon. These expansion plans are expected to help the company grow up to eight percent this year.

"We are also looking at foreign locations, say Guam, but there is nothing final on overseas locations yet," he said.

Agribusiness to grow

The 2006 Entrepreneur of the Year for the Philippines, La Frutera Inc. chair and CEO Senen Bacani, said agriculture and other business could thrive even in areas with security issues, such as Mindanao, provided investors are willing to take calculated risks.

"Mindanao is always tainted by security issues, and the Philippines itself is often tainted by security issues," he said. "But business can change things. For us (La Frutera), we wanted to see that you can operate a thriving business in Mindanao."

The former Agriculture secretary established Ultrex Management and Investments Corp., a company which managed corporate banana farms, in 1993.

By 1996, his company had roped in Mideast company Chiquita Unifrutti International to introduce Mindanao-grown cavendish ba-

ELECTION/ B9

Baguio asks John Hay developers to pay taxes

By Vincent Cabreza
Inquirer Northern Luzon

BAGUIO CITY—CITY OFFICIALS HAVE urged the developers of Camp John Hay to resume paying rent, now that President Macapagal-Arroyo signed the laws restoring their tax incentives.

Acting city Mayor Reinaldo Bautista Jr. said he had also asked the city treasurer and accountants to meet with Bases Conversion Development Authority (BCDA) officials to discuss the fate of a piece of property the city government had mortgaged using its unremitted share of P560 million from the John Hay rent.

Bautista said the Government Service Insurance System, previous owner of the Baguio Convention Center, is repossessing this facility because of BCDA's failure to complete payments on behalf of the city government.

Fil Estate chair Robert John Sobrepeña, who also chairs the Camp John Hay Development Corp. (CJHDevco), stopped paying the BCDA in 2005 when the Supreme Court affirmed its 2003 decision to nullify the fiscal incentives offered by the John Hay Special Economic Zone.

The court ruling also affected the tax benefits offered by the BCDA-administered economic zones at Clark in Pampanga and Poro Point in La Union.

The court said the BCDA law (Republic Act 7227) only specified tax breaks and import duty incentives for businesses located inside the Subic Bay Freeport.

Some councilors here said the CJHDevco did not reply when asked how it intended to proceed now that its tax perks have been restored.

Ms Arroyo signed Republic Acts 9399 and 9400 in Clark last week that restored the fiscal incentives offered by the BCDA zones, and gave amnesty to businesses operating in these zones for the liabilities they incurred after they lost their tax privileges.

The CJHDevco was already burdened by a P1.1-billion rent, and had just implemented a repayment schedule when the high court issued its decision.

CJHDevco is negotiating for a second payment deal, according to government sources.

Investments in autogas seen rising

Shell says rules on LPG as transport fuel provide stability to industry

By Abigail L. Ho

THE RECENT ISSUANCE OF RULES governing autogas, or liquefied petroleum gas used as transport fuel, is expected to spur more investments in the sector, according to a leading player in the autogas market.

Bernard Ong, general manager for LPG of autogas supplier Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corp., said the newly issued rules provided more stability to the industry, which investors need.

"With rules, there is a better assurance of long-term sustainability and development of the industry," he said.

"Without rules, people may take shortcuts or may improvise and develop their own solutions, which can compromise the quality of the product," he added.

The rules, he said, were very much welcome, although a lot of improvements could still be incorporated moving forward.

To make these improvements, he said industry stakeholders should work closely with the government, particularly the Department of Energy.

"Responsible players in the industry should make suggestions (as to how the rules could be further improved)," he said.

The DOE, through Department Circular No. 2007-02-2002, has issued the guidelines governing the autogas business, covering all aspects, ranging from supplying, hauling, storing, and handling, to marketing and distribution.

Entities interested in entering the industry should first secure a Standards Compliance Certificate (SCC) from the DOE.

To get one, pertinent documents should be submitted, including the details of their business activities, as well as permits and licenses from various government agencies.

Permits should be issued by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Bureau of Product Standards, and the concerned local government unit.

LPG bulk suppliers and haulers should also submit a list of their autogas buyers, including but not limited to taxi companies, garage-based clients and fleet operators.

Operators of autogas dispensing stations, on the other hand, are also required to submit their quarterly sales and purchase volume.

The circular likewise requires autogas sellers to strictly follow product quality standards for LPG products for automotive use, as stated under Philippine National Standard/DOE QS 005:2005.

This specifies that only Type 2B Propane-Butane Mixture for Motor Fuels can be dispensed at auto-LPG dispensing stations.

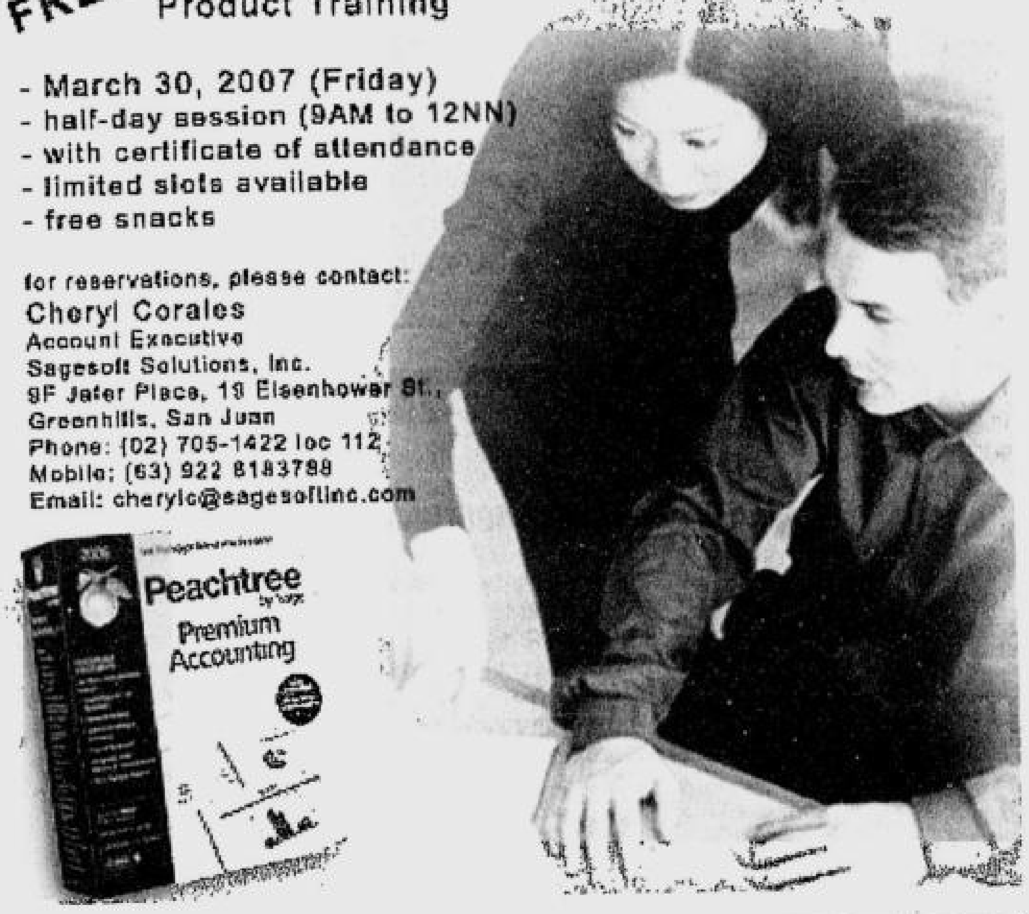
According to data from the DOE, there are 3,955 auto-LPG vehicles nationwide, some of which are owned by the government and private users.

In Metro Manila alone, there are 20 service station-based, 11 stand alone, five refilling/bulk plant-based, and five garage-based auto-LPG stations.

In the Visayas, there are at least 20 dispensing stations—seven of which are stand alone and 13 are garage-based. Another eight dispensing stations are in Mindanao.

There are also nine auto-LPG conversion companies in 14 locations in Metro Manila. More shops are expected to open in other parts of the country in the coming months.

SWEEP OF FORTUNE
Clarita Estrada, 58, of Barangay Bilis in Burgos, La Union dries the brooms she made out of woven tiger grass. Her earnings help put her kids through school.
EV ESPIRITU/ NORTHERN LUZON BUREAU



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Ayala group to go after bigger share of growing OFW business

By Doris C. Dumlao

AYALA CORP. SEEKS TO CAPTURE MORE business from the country's growing pool of overseas Filipino workers by linking its flagship businesses in banking, property and telecommunications.

Ayala Corp. vice chair Fernando Zobel de Ayala, at the launching of a new privilege membership card for Filipinos overseas, said the conglomerate would like to do much more for the OFW community, which in 2006 sent about $2.8 billion in remittances through banking unit Bank of the Philippine Islands.

The group has now harnessed its three profitable core businesses—Ayala Land Inc., BPI and Globe Telecoms—to come up with "One Ayala," a pioneering membership perks platform for OFWs.

"One Ayala," acts as a banking, rewards and privilege card; which can be obtained after the OFW's first banking, property or telecommunications transaction from any of the three core Ayala subsidiaries.

Zobel noted that BPI's housing loan portfolio had hit the P1-billion mark while 40 percent of ALI's new property sales were contracted with Filipinos based abroad—excluding sales where the signatories were local beneficiaries.

He added that mobile phone provider Globe Telecoms had likewise earned P205 million through inbound international calls and P241 million in pre-paid cell phone reloads last year.

Zobel, together with the CEOs of the three flagship subsidiaries ALI, BPI and Globe Telecoms, launched last Thursday the "One Ayala" platform which aimed to integrate the resources of all these companies to better serve the OFW market.

The card gives the OFWs and their families various perks and discounts from the three companies.

Zobel said the card should reach "anywhere there is a large concentration of Filipino workers ... from the US East and West Coasts, to Europe, the Middle East and in Southeast Asia.

Election spending may …

From page B8

nanas to the Japanese market. Now with a total of 45,000 hectares, La Frutera is one of the top ten banana farms in the country.

La Frutera is currently producing five million boxes of bananas from Maguindanao in the Mindanao region, worth $10 million.

"This will grow to $20 million in two years," Bacani said. He said there will be more exports to South Korea, China, Mideast and Japan.

Beauty biz blooming

In the cosmetics business, Ever Bilena Cosmetics Inc. CEO Dioceldo S. Sy said that aside from the general increase in spending in the country, the booming Asian trade for cosmetics will benefit companies such as his.

He said his company is growing by ten percent every year, its sales reaching P500 million in 2006.

"It could reach P600 million to P700 million this year," Sy said.

If growth continues, Ever Bilena may undertake an initial public offering (IPO) in five years, he added.

He said that professionalizing the business through an IPO would help the company expand overseas.

Tourism is also expected to grow as industry players strive to bring in more tourists into the country, Islands Souvenirs Inc. (ISI) CEO and president Jay Aldeguer said.

Souvenirs going global

From just one souvenir cart at the White Gold Department Store in Cebu City in 1992, ISI now has international franchisees in Singapore, Japan, San Francisco and Macau. Locally, ISI has more than 140 outlets, including company-owned and franchised outlets.

He also said ISI will slowly but surely grow its international business.

Even small businesses in places outside Metro Manila have room for growth, according to Julita Urbina, CEO and founder of Cafe Laguna.

Cafe Laguna is a Cebu-based chain of restaurants serving Filipino, Vietnamese and Thai cuisine.

Urbina, who was born and raised in Laguna, recalled that her small eatery, when it opened in Lahug, Cebu in 1979, thrived even if it was not located in Manila. That eatery became a fine dining restaurant called Cafe Laguna in 1991.

"We are confident of the market in Cebu, we can still expand there," she said. "We do not have to branch out to Metro Manila yet."

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(by Rowen Untivero) April 19-20, 2007

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(By Emilio Macasaet III) April 25-26, 2007

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(by Josiah Go) April 24, 2007

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    - A government hospital (for Visayas applicants)
    - Davao Medical Center (for Mindanao applicants)
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- Ombudsman and Sandigan Bayan Clearances (for government employees)

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PROF. CARMELA N. HADIA
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BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE
(Head Office)

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) invites interested general building contractors with current Philippine Contractors Accreditation Board (PCAB) License to apply for eligibity and to bid and if later found eligible, to bid for the project described below:

Project Title : Proposed Supply/Installation and Repair of Aluminum Panel Windows at the BSP Main Complex Buildings
Scope of Work : Furnishing of all materials, labor, tools, equipment technical supervision and other services and performing all operations necessary for the proposed supply/installation and repair of aluminum panel windows at the BSP Main Complex Buildings all in accordance with the approved plans and specifications and subject to the terms and conditions of the contract.
Project Location : BSP Main Complex A. Mabini St. cor. P. Ocampo, Manila.
Approved Budget : Twenty One Million Six Hundred Twelve Thousand One Hundred Thirty One Pesos (P21,612,131.00).
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Contract Duration : One Hundred Twenty (120) calendar days
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Contractor's Construction Experience : Should have completed within the last five (5) years (2002 to present) at least three (3) projects involving construction with glass and glazing works or similar projects. The prospective bidder's largest single completed similar contract must be at least ten million eight hundred ten thousand pesos (P10,810,000.00).
Certification of Satisfactory Performance : Should be able to submit certificates of satisfactory performance from the client of the declared completed similar projects.
For those contractors who have previously done/completed BSP project/s, the certificate/s of satisfactory performance issued by the Bank for said project/s must be submitted.
Net Financial Contracting Capacity : At least Twenty One Million Six Hundred Twelve Thousand One Hundred Thirty One Pesos (P21,612,131.00) computed as 10 x (current asset less current liabilities) minus (value of all on-going contracts including awarded yet to be started.)
or
Credit Line of Cash Deposit Certificate : At least Two Million One Hundred Sixty Two Thousand Pesos P2,162,000.00)
Letter of Intent (LOI)/ Eligibility Statement Forms
Cost of Forms : Five Hundred Pesos per set (P500.00/set)
Date of Issuance : March 26 to April 10, 2007/9:00 AM to 1:30 PM
Deadline of Submission : April 13, 2007/9:30 AM
Notice of Eligibility/ Ineligibility
Date of Issuance : April 26, 2007/9:00 AM to 4:30 PM
Bid/Tender Documents Issuance : Shall be issued only to eligible contractors upon payment of a non-refundable fee of Ten Thousand Eight Hundred Pesos (P10,800.00).
Pre-Bid Conference
Date and Time : May 04, 2007/9:30 AM
Venue : MR2A Conference Room, 2nd Floor BSP Main Complex, A. Mabini cor. P. Ocampo St. Manila.
Submission and Opening of Bids
Deadline of Submission : May 22, 2007 / 2:00 PM

For inquiries, please call BAC Secretariat - telephone no. 524-7011 local 3143.

The venue for the issuance and submission of accomplished eligibility statements and bid documents is at the BAC Secretariat, Room 204, 2nd Floor - Five Storey Building, BSP Main complex A. Mabini cor. P. Ocampo St. Manila.

The schedule of bid activities from the issuance of notice of eligibility/ineligibility up to the deadline of submission of bids may be subject to change.

The provisions of Republic Act No. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations shall govern relative to the bidding and award of contract including its implementation.

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, and to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

(Sgd.) JUAN DE ZUÑIGA, JR.
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(PDI - Mar 26. 2007)

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Any person with valid objection/s on the above-mentioned project may file his/her objection in writing, under oath, with the BOI within three (3) days from the date of this publication.

(Sgd.) **RUDY B. CAÑA**
Director
Project Evaluation and Registration Department

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The Department of Social Welfare and Development is calling the attention of the biological parent/s of the minor **Evan Chris** whose picture appears above.

The biological parent/s may contact Marissa O. Ballon, Social Worker of the Department of Social Welfare and Development – National Capital Region – Adoption, Resource and Referral Unit at 389 San Rafael St., cor. Legarda, Manila or contact her at Telephone Number 734-86-51.

(PDI–March 26, 2007)

PAG-IBIG TOP TAXPAYER FOR 2006

THE PAG-IBIG FUND, ONE OF THE COUNTRY'S MOST FINANCIALLY stable government institutions, was cited by the Bureau of Internal Revenue for its invaluable support to the outstanding tax collection performance of BIR Revenue District Office 50-South Makati during the recently concluded 2007 Tax Campaign Kick-off held at the Hotel Intercontinental in Makati City. Pag-IBIG is ranked first among the biggest taxpayers of RDO 50. Pag-IBIG President and CEO Lawyer Romero F.S. Quimbo (extreme right) received the Certificate of Recognition from BIR Deputy Commissioner for Operations Group, Atty. Lilian Hefti. Present during the awarding are (from left) Nieva Guerrero, Assistant Regional Director of Revenue Region 8; Lawyer Salvador Lasala, Assistant Revenue District Officer, RDO50-South Makati; and Lawyer Cesar Charlie Lim, Revenue District Officer, RDO50-South Makati.

Madz and Bruckner at the PPO closing season concert

ANTON BRUCKNER'S (1824-1896) setting of the great hymn of praise to God, the *Te Deum* and his last great work, *Symphony No. 9*, will be the Philippine Philharmonic Orchestra's (PPO) closing concert for the season, slated on April 13, 8pm at the CCP Main Theater.

Entitled "Bruckner", the concert will feature the world-renowned Philippine Madrigal Singers or Madz on stage interpreting Bruckner's two greatest works for choir and orchestra. *Te Deum*, considered by many as Bruckner's best work, was his most mature vocal composition requiring four soloists, a choir, organ and orchestra, while the *Symphony No. 9*, though left unfinished, is said to be the musical summation of his life.

One of the world's best choirs, the Madz has consistently won top prizes in the world's most prestigious choral competitions such as Arezzo and Gorizia in Italy, Miezesdroje in Poland, Marktoberdorf in Germany, Spittal in Austria, Neuchatal in Switzerland, Tours in France, Varna in Bulgaria, Debrecen in Hungary and Tolosa in Spain. In 2004, the group was the grand prizewinner in the 50^{th} *Certamen Internacional de Habaneras y Polifonia* in Torrevieja, Spain, the first choir from Asia to win the first prizes in the competition's habanera and polyphony category. The Madz was founded by National Artist for Music Andrea Veneracion and its new choirmaster is Mark Anthony Carpio.

OBITUARIES

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His loving wife, **Susana**; children **Sr. Reine, Manny** and **Estie, Nelly** and **Rajiv, Pol** and **Ellen, Litz** and **Jorge, Buena** and **†Willy**; grandchildren and great-grandchildren request the pious readers to join them in prayers for his eternal happiness in heaven.

His remains lie in state at Arlington Memorial Chapels, 12 G. Araneta Avenue, Quezon City.

There will be a 9:00 a.m. Memorial Mass on Tuesday, March 27, 2007, and interment will be at 1:00 p.m. at Himlayang Pilipino Memorial Park.

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Pag-IBIG dividends reach P6.18B in '06

THE PAG-IBIG FUND BOARD OF Trustees, chaired by Vice President Noli De Castro, approved and declared P6.18 billion as dividends for the year 2006. The amount comprises 80 percent of the Fund's P7.7 billion net income last year.

According to Pag-IBIG Fund President and Chief Executive Officer, Atty. Romero F.S. Quimbo, "this amount breaks the record previously set by the Fund in the past year, as it represents the biggest dividend in our 26-year history."

Quimbo further adds that the 2006 dividend comprises the largest ever percentage cut from the Fund's net income distributed to its members, leading to a dividend rate of 4.81 percent. The said amount will be credited proportionately to the members' total accumulated savings. The Pag-IBIG Fund Charter provides that it should distribute at least 70 percent of its annual net income as dividends to its members.

Dividend levels have been increasing for the last seven years, posting P1.81 billion in 2000, P3.44 billion in 2001, P3.74 billion in 2002, P4.21 billion in 2003, and P4.85 billion in 2004. In 2005, the Fund gave out 75% of its income as dividends, amounting to P5.54 B.

The steady increase in annual dividends signifies the Pag-IBIG Fund's continuous growth and stable financial standing, backed by its proven track record as a key player in housing finance.

"More effective collection procedures and more efficient fund management resulted to the Fund's profitability. More income for the Fund eventually leads to higher dividends and better services for our 6.48M members worldwide," Quimbo said.

To beef up its reserves, Pag-IBIG Fund issued this month the "Pag-IBIG Housing Bonds, series 2007", or the *Kaunlaran ng Bayan* Bonds, with an aggregate issue size of P2 Billion.

The Philippine Ratings Service Corporation attested to Pag-IBIG Fund's credit worthiness by giving it a Aaa-(corp) rating in 2005. The following year, Pag-IBIG Fund received international recognition as the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT) conferred the prestigious Habitat Scroll of Honour Award for 2006 to the Fund during the celebration of World Habitat Day.

YOUNG assured it's easy to learn the T9 software

Software developer campaigns for correctly spelled text messages

Text and photos by Charles E. Buban

IT'S A SOFTWARE A LOT OF people don't know they have in their cell phones. And even those who do often disable the T9 text input software and prefer instead to use slang words and pop phrases when sending text messages.

"Exchanging text messages this way is quite informal, can result in confusion and—even worse—misunderstanding. We believe the T9 software could help a lot in addressing this concern and cellphone users only have to be instructed how to properly use it," said James Young, senior marketing manager of Tegic Communications, the company that developed T9 software and since 1996, licensed it to some of the world's biggest cellphone manufacturers.

Young, who oversees the promotion and marketing of the T9 software in Southeast Asia, launched the "Text Right ... T9 It!" campaign last November and was again here last month to check on its progress.

"One of the reasons why people don't use or activate the T9 software is probably because they don't know how to properly use it. Because of this, the company decided to launch a promotional campaign, teaming up with universities to teach students the proper way of using the software," he said.

Target students

Young said the company decided to initially target students since a number of educators in the region have expressed concern about the deteriorating word proficiency of young people, as reflected in the way they communicate when using their cell phones.

"When we did our survey we found that they resort to this practice because they are always in a hurry or they want to cram as much information as they could in just one text message transmission. By learning how to use the T9 software, they will realize that they can still send their text messages quickly but with correctly spelt words," Young reported.

Last month, in coordination with the Commission on Higher Education, Tegic teamed up with the South Manila Inter-Institutional Consortium (SMIIC) to reach more students.

The SMIIC is an association comprised of 12 different schools and universities, namely Adamson University, Emilio Aguinaldo College, De La Salle-College of Saint Benilde, De La Salle University-Manila, Lyceum of the Philippines University, Philippine Christian University, Philippine Normal University, Philippine Women's University, St. Paul University-Manila, St. Scholastica's College, Technological University of the Philippines and University of the Philippines-Manila.

First in the region

Tegic's campaign in the Philippines is the first to be carried out in the region in recognition of the country as the SMS capital of the world (with at least 200 million sent every day, according to the National Telecommunications Commission).

"Tegic Communications also shares SMIIC's theme and vision in giving a meaningful education to its students. This is just one of our means to influence more students, our primary target, to send correctly spelt text messages," said Young, referring to the SMIIC.

He explained that the T9 software offers cell phone users advanced word completion functionality, enabling them to press just a few keys to pull up the desired word.

Turn on the dictionary

"By activating the T9 software—just turn on the dictionary function in the cell phone's options menu—cell phone users could make one key press where three may have been required before," Young explained.

Unlike traditional multi-tap text entry (which requires a user to press a key multiple times to get to the desired letter), the T9 software only requires its user to press one key per letter.

For example, to enter the word "hello" using multi-tap, it would have taken the user 12 key presses to enter the word.

But when the T9 is activated, one only has to press just five keys, 4-3-5-5-6 since the T9 will recognize that the most commonly used word matching this numeric sequence is "hello."

"If more than one word shares the same numeric sequence, the T9 provides the most commonly used word, with the ability to scroll to the next most commonly used word by pressing the zero (or next) key," Young explained.

He added that cell phones with T9 have in memory a 60,000-word data base that includes 7,000 of the most common given and surnames.

Will remember it

"However, if you type in a word that the T9 doesn't recognize, the software will remember it and will recognize it next time. Indeed, it's a text experience that gets faster every time," promised Young.

He assured that Tegic has vast international experience supporting mobile operators and developers to help stimulate text message use in mobile phones with T9.

In fact, Tegic's newly launched T9 version, the XT9 (now available on a number of cellphone users), now even features spelling correction that spots transposed letters and missed keys.

Headquartered in Seattle, Tegic is the leading provider of predictive text input software. Today, T9 software is available in more than 800 mobile phone models or over 2 billion cellphone units worldwide.

NOKIA
T9 dictionary activated

THE T9 SOFTWARE has been in most cellphone models since 1996

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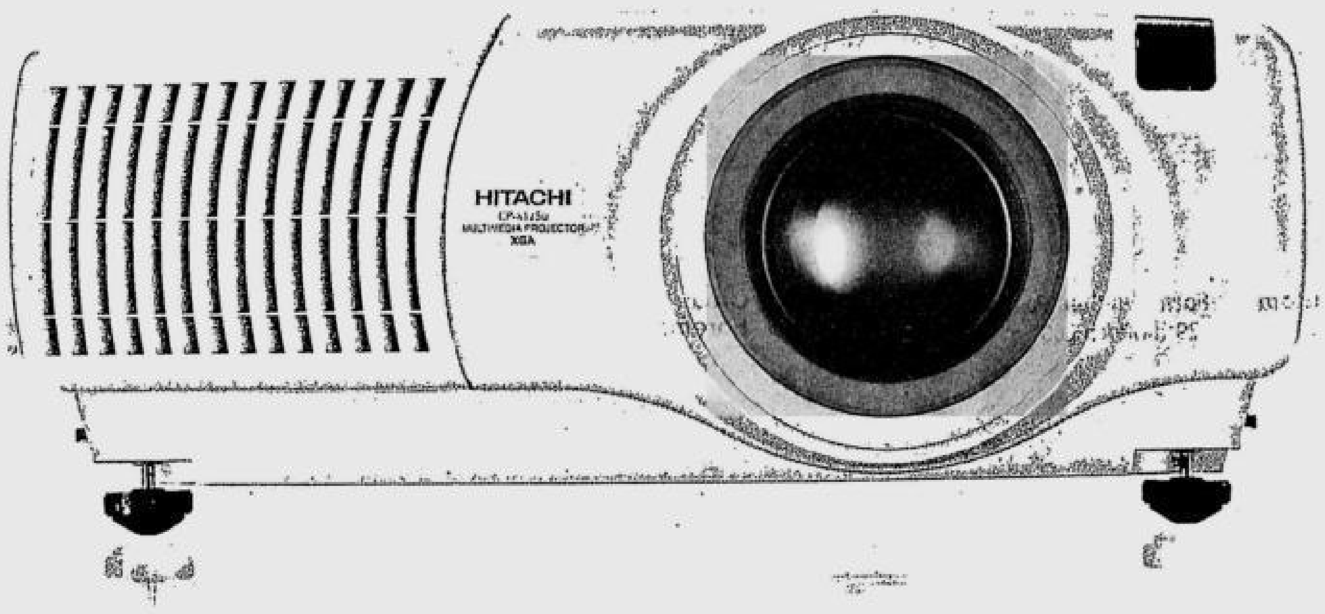

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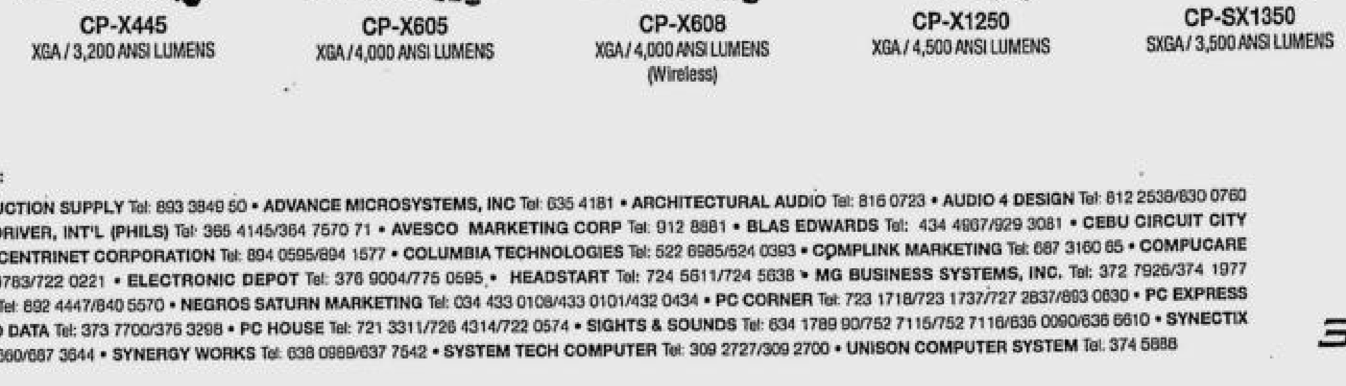

CP-RS55
SVGA / 1,500 ANSI LUMENS

CP-X1
XGA / 2,000 ANSI LUMENS
(PC-less)

CP-X251
XGA / 2,100 ANSI LUMENS

CP-X260
XGA / 2,500 ANSI LUMENS

CP-X267
XGA / 2,500 ANSI LUMENS
(Wireless)

CP-X445
XGA / 3,200 ANSI LUMENS

CP-X605
XGA / 4,000 ANSI LUMENS

CP-X608
XGA / 4,000 ANSI LUMENS
(Wireless)

CP-X1250
XGA / 4,500 ANSI LUMENS

CP-SX1350
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Editor **Aries Espinosa**

Protein-energy malnutrition affects chronically ill patients

PROTEIN ENERGY MALNUTRITION or PEM has been identified as a major life-threatening problem in patients with chronic diseases such as those involving the liver. Studies have shown that if a person suffering from a chronic illness succumbs to malnutrition, a significant deterioration of body functions ensues, which adversely affects recovery. This is particularly true for those suffering from cirrhosis and other liver diseases, who have been found to have low levels of branched-chain amino acids (BCAAs) and albumin (protein) in their blood, leading to PEM.

Thus, supplementation with BCAAs is recommended for these patients. To address this need of liver-impaired patients, Otsuka (Philippines) Pharmaceuticals Inc launched BCAA as Aminoleban Oral for the treatment of hepatic encephalopathy, and as an essential nutritional supplement for liver failure patients.

To stress the importance of diet and other supportive management, and the role of Aminoleban in managing liver cirrhosis, Otsuka is expanding its public outreach program to help more patients with liver impairment through the establishment of the PEM Pal Club (Protein-Energy Malnutrition Pal Club), a patient support system that aims to provide patient education through lay-forums which will be conducted on different "Bantay Atay Centers" nationwide.

Lectures will be presented by local medical doctors, to be supported by nutritionists who will ensure ethical and accurate information. PEM Pal hotline and website will serve as communication mediums to all patients and their caregivers who wish to learn more about liver disease prevention and management. Lastly, Aminoleban Oral discounts will be provided to all patients registered by their attending physicians to PEM Pal Club.

The role of BCAA supplementation has been established in well-designed clinical trials. A study by Dr. Hisataki Moriwaki and his colleagues at the Gifu University School of Medicine showed that BCAA supplementation aids in the synthesis and secretion of albumin, and improves the quality of life and survival of patients with liver cirrhosis.

Similar results were obtained by Dr. Yasutoshi Muto and his colleagues in a study published in the journal Clinical Gastroenterology and Hepatology. The study showed that long-term administration of BCAA supplements slows down the progression of liver failure and is associated with better survival in patients with cirrhosis.

Many experts believe that BCAA supplementation can help address the problem of malnutrition in patients with chronic liver problems. Malnutrition, according to the World Health Organization, is the "imbalance between the supply of nutrients and energy and the body's demand for them to ensure growth, maintenance, and specific functions."

Patients with chronic diseases such as liver cirrhosis, cancer, renal ailments, and AIDS often suffer from malnutrition-specifically, protein-energy malnutrition-due to poor nutrient intake and the body's impaired ability to process food and nutrients.

In general, PEM develops in children and adults who consume insufficient protein and calories to meet the body's nutritional needs. In developing countries PEM is one of the leading causes of child mortality.

In industrialized countries such as the United States, however, PEM affects the elderly living in nursing homes and patients suffering from chronic diseases. As many as half of patients hospitalized and 55 percent of elderly patients in the States suffer from PEM.

Malnutrition is also common among hospitalized Filipino patients. A 1998 survey by St. Luke's Medical Center showed that among hospitalized patients, 34 percent were malnourished and 34 percent were underweight.

MOTORIST'S HANDBOOK NLEXPRESS WINS ANVIL AWARD OF MERIT

In photo, receiving the Anvil Award of Merit is (third from right) Anthony M. Mabasa, president and CEO of Tollways Management Corp with Chief Justice Reynato S. Puno, chair of the board of jurors. Flanking them are (extreme left) Butch S. Raquel, APR, chair of the 42nd Anvil Awards committee and (second from left) Ma. Amylyn C. Sison De Quiros, APR, president of the Public Relations Society of the Philippines. Representing TMC with Mabasa are (second from right) the vice president of traffic operations and (extreme right) Benigno C. Valles, community relations manager at TMC.

GENERAL MILLS DONATES TO PNRC FOR TYPHOON REMING VICTIMS

THE PHILIPPINE NATIO
GENERAL MILLS
TWENTY THOUSAND DOLLARS

General Mills Philippines, a subsidiary of US company, General Mills, donated $20,000 (P1,000,000) to the Philippine National Red Cross for the victims of Typhoon 'Reming' which ravaged the Bicol area. Shown are Philippine National Red Cross Chair and CEO, Senator Richard Gordon; General Mills Philippines managing director Tess Panganiban (left), senior marketing manager Jennifer C. Wong, (right) and finance and supply chain director Ravi Sivaraman (far right). In the Philippines, General Mills markets some of the world's best loved brands including Pillsbury Hotcakes and Crispee coating mix, Häagen-Dazs Super Premium Ice Cream, Betty Crocker baking products, Old El Paso, Pop Secret and Progresso Soups. General Mills is committed to the mission of 'Nourishing Lives'. It strives to make a meaningful difference in every neighborhood, city and town where its employees live and work. As a leading food manufacturer, its products are in over 100 countries all over the world.

PPTF'S NEW PRESIDENT

Benito 'Benny' Javierto Brizuela is shown being sworn in as the new president of the Philippine Printing Technical Foundation Inc during PPTF's General Membership Meeting and Induction ceremonies held at the Peninsula Hotel's Rigodon ballroom last Feb. 23. Other officers are Celso Valera (trustee), Rolando Rocha (1st vice president), George Lora (2nd vice president), Louie Gerard Abiva (secretary), Prosy Punzalan (treasurer), Aris Del Mundo (auditor), Clemente Sarte III (PRO), lawyer Godofredo V. Arquiza (trustee), Melchora Delos Santos (trustee), Martin Yabut Jr. (trustee), Paulito Maskarino (trustee), Carlos Malibiran (trustee), Ricardo Munoz (trustee) and Antonio Tanael (trustee).

CSR AT WORK

Dindo Danao (leftmost) executive director of Odyssey Foundation Inc hands in a check donation to ABS-CBN's broadcast journalist Kaye Dacer to help fund the construction of a health and livelihood center in Camalig, Albay. At right is Sen. Fred Lim. Odyssey Foundation is the corporate social responsibility arm of CDO-Foodsphere Inc.

ANVIL AWARDS CITES DIWA LEARNING SYSTEMS

42nd
Anvil
AWARD

Officials of Diwa Learning Systems show the awards they received at the 42nd Anvil Awards for their programs Tribute to Teachers, which won an Anvil Award of Excellence and The Many Faces of the Teacher, which won an Anvil Award of Merit. These programs are organized together with the Bato Balani Foundation Inc (BBFI), a non-profit organization engaged in teacher training and research on Philippine education issues. In photo are (from left) Diwa Learning Systems chair Saturnino Belen and executive director Elma Ropeta, Bato Balani Foundation director for programs and research Ching Jorge and Diwa Learning Systems president Amada J. Javellana.

MSD, DZMM launch School-on-Air on cervical-CA prevention

IN OBSERVANCE OF CERVICAL CANCER Awareness and Women's Month, pharmaceutical company Merck Sharp & Dohme (MSD) and radio station DZMM (630 kHz) launched the School-on-Air (SOA) segment to educate the public about ways to prevent cervical cancer. SOA is aired within the radio program "Bago Yan Ah!"-a DZMM science and technology program that airs 4:30 - 6 p.m. on Sundays. The information campaign will run from March to June.

The segment aims to educate the public, especially Filipino women, about cervical-cancer prevention, early screening, and detection, and to involve doctors in cascading relevant information about the disease.

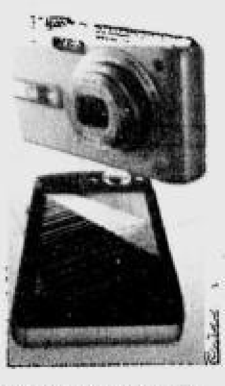
Besides breast cancer, cervical cancer has become a major health problem in the Philippines. According to the 2005 Philippine Cancer Facts and Estimates published by the Philippine Cancer Society, cervical cancer was the second leading cause of cancer deaths in women in 2004. In 2005, 7,277 new cases of cervical cancer and 3,807 deaths were estimated to have occurred. Approximately 10 Filipino women were estimated to have died each day from cervical cancer. Scientists recently discovered that cervical cancer is caused by the human papillomavirus (HPV), a silent virus that does not always have symptoms. For the majority of people who have HPV, the body's defenses are enough to clear the virus. However, for women who do not clear certain types of the virus, cervical cancer can develop later in life.

Since the most common form of cervical cancer starts with precancerous changes, there are two ways to stop the disease from developing: prevent the precancers or detect precancers before they become cancerous. Most precancers of the cervix can be prevented by avoiding exposure to HPV. Delaying sexual intercourse while one is young can help avoid HPV. Limiting the number of sexual partners and avoiding sex with people who have had many sexual partners can lower risk of exposure to HPV. Vaccines that can immunize people against HPV infection have been developed and have been shown to reduce the chances of abnormal Pap test caused by HPV types 16 and 18. Detection and treatment of precancers can stop cervical cancer before it becomes fully developed. The Pap smear (also called Pap test) is a simple test that detects abnormal cells in the cervix that may become cancerous. Over the past 30 years, deaths due to cervical cancer have decreased by 50 percent due to widespread screening with the Pap smear. The American Cancer Society recommends that women after the onset of sexual activity, or after the age of 20 should have two consecutive yearly smears. If these are negative, smears should be repeated every three years. It is recommended that for the average risk Filipino female, a Pap smear should be done every year after an initial negative test starting at age 30. High-risk women may be tested more frequently.

There is good news though to Filipinos. A breakthrough vaccine was recently developed and made available to girls as young as nine years old. Women need to consult an OB-gynecologist or their daughter's pediatrician to discuss ways to help prevent cervical cancer and other consequences of HPV. You can also call the MSD Call Center at 878-6338 or (toll-free) 1-800-1-888-6737, or visit www.msd-beonguard.com for additional information.

Product FILES

Panasonic unveils newest Lumix innovations



PANASONIC SETS forth its latest breakthrough for a perfect, picturesque lens adventure with Lumix 7.2-megapixel, DMC-FX50 and DMC-FX07 cameras that promise a novel approach to capture breathtaking scenes and heartfelt memories in a flash. Featuring an Intelligent Image Stabilizer by Mega OIS (Optical Image Stabilizer) and Intelligent ISO control, DMC-FX50 and DMC-FX07 cameras integrate a 3-inch large LCD and pursues further compactness with a 2.5-inch LCD, respectively. The DMC-FX50/FX07 cameras allow users to enjoy the benefit of a wide-angle lens when shooting indoor group portraits, expansive landscapes, and architectural scenes that forever change the wonders of modern photography. Panasonic's excellent image stabilizing system allows users to take clear, crisp images in any situation, leaving everything to the smart tricks of the Lumix camera. Beautifully-designed and perfect to document special moments of your lives, the new Panasonic Lumix DMC-FX50 and Lumix FX07 cameras are available in silver and black colors. Panasonic further sustains its commitment to the society as it continuously provides world-class services and quality products attuned to the contemporary trends in the market and to the needs and satisfaction of its customers.

A powerful immune system is key to good health

FOR SOME, THEIR IMMUNE SYSTEMS SIMPLY aren't up to the challenges of today's environment. Pollution, toxic chemicals, new, stronger strains of bacterial, fungal and viral infections, even the drugs we take to kill infections all add stress to your immune system. To make matters worse, our immune systems become less efficient as we age. No wonder so may of us feel like we're struggling harder than ever to stay healthy. Fortunately, you can fortify your body with quality nutritional supplementation to your immune system and help you lead an active, vital life. This is the role of the Transfer Factors. Discovered by Dr. H. Sherwood Lawrence (prior head of infectious diseases and immunology of New York University, 1959-2000), while studying tuberculosis in 1949. He discovered he could "transfer" a positive immune response from a recovered donor to a naïve recipient, someone who had never encountered tuberculosis. One of the strongest forces in nature for transferring and ensuring good health, transfer factors have taken their place on the forefront of nutritional science. Simply stated, transfer factors are tiny molecules that transfer immunity information from one entity to another, such as between a mother and her infant who she breastfeeds. Make sure your body is in fighting shape for a healthy future! For more information, contact 0916-2823473, 0922-5841507, 0921-2113798.

BITS Clips

C2 Summer Escapades

C2 LIVE LIFE SERIES' SUMMER ESCAPADES invites you and your friends to turn these sunny days into one long party, from Libis to Boracay, Cebu, Bohol, Subic, La Union, Puerto Galera, Davao, and if you're lucky, even Palau, Micronesia. Kick off is on March 31. Get the chance to win a trip to the island paradise of Boracay via Asian Spirit, or to any of the C2 Summer Escapades' local beach destinations, as your favorite green tea drink starts the summer season with a send-off party at the Fuente Circle in Eastwood City, Libis. The event is open to everyone. Just come in your hippest summer get-up and enjoy music from Drip and DJ Erwin Edralin, and other activities, from 7 p.m. onwards. To join the raffle, simply purchase C2 at the Summer Escapades events: Eastwood (March 31); Boracay (April 5-7 and 13-14); Cebu and Bohol (April 6- 7); and Davao, La Union, Subic (April 28- 29), and Puerto Galera (April 28-30). The grand draw will be on May 4 at Eastwood City.

The Legend Villas Lenten specials

HAVE A MEANINGFUL LENTEN WEEKEND WITH your kids at The Legend Villas. From April 1-8, avail of a special room package by booking two nights and enjoying the third night free. For only P2,999 nett/night, enjoy accommodations in a Superior Room good for two adults and two kids below 7 years old. The package is inclusive of daily breakfasts and lunch or dinner for two adults and two children below 7 years old. Upon registration, kids will be given a Kiddie Fun Kit. On April 6, kids will enjoy baking goodies with the chef or learn how to make healthy salads on April 7. Never miss the Egg Hunting on April 8. Book at The Legend Villas, located at 60 Pioneer corner Madison Streets, Mandaluyong City. Call Central Reservations at 702-2700 to 04 or e-mail reservations@legendhotels.com.ph.

PSGP forum

THE PARKINSON'S Support of the Philippines (PSGP), will hold a meeting on April 1, starting at 12:30 p.m. at the Auditorium of the Cathedral Heights Building (South Tower), 14th floor, St Luke's Medical Center, E. Rodriguez Sr. Ave., Quezon City. Dr. Gerald H. Evidente, medical adviser, PSGP will discuss the "Myths and Truths about Herbs and Supplement for Parkinson's disease and Other Movement Disorders." Lunch will not be served, but drinks will be available. The PSGP is a non-profit organization that is funded by generous contributions from each members and supporters as well as by the yearly members dues.

PPSI 44th Annual Convention

THE PHILIPPINE PEDIATRIC SOCIETY INC INVITES all doctors to its 44th Annual Convention with the theme "The PPS at Sixty, Looking Forward." This will be held at the PICC on April 24-27. The convention will feature renowned foreign and local plenary speakers who will talk about the Filipino child, the impact on his environs and an interesting mix of both old and new issues. For inquiries, call Rona Oraye or Ofel Deterala at 926-6758 or 926-6759.

Dairy Expo and Congress 2007

THE THREE-DAY DAIRY EXPO AND CONGRESS 2007 dubbed "Todo Asenso, Mag Dairy Business Tayo!" opens March 29 to 31 at the Fontana Convention Center in Clarkfield Pampanga. It aims to gather dairy producers to boost and develop the potentials of the dairy business in the Philippines while the expo aims to gather delegates to showcase new products and services developed after the series of seminars conducted among dairy cooperatives last year. For details, call Premier Events at 426-9603, 920-8136 and 436-4209.

MANG INASAL OPENS AT SM CITY BACOLOD

Mang Inasal

Shown is the long queue of customers patiently waiting for their turn to order meals during the recent opening of Mang Inasal at SM City Bacolod. Customers were treated to Paborito meals of chicken marinated in a concoction of local herbs and spices skewered in bamboo sticks packaged with rice wrapped in banana leaves. These meals were complimented with native desserts like halo-halo, mais con yelo, sorbetes, and sago't gulaman. Mang Inasal-SM City Bacolod is the 34th branch, located at the Ground Floor, South Wing of the Mall. Just recently, Mang Inasal recently opened two branches at D' Talipapa and D' Mall in Boracay Island. For more info or franchise inquiries visit our website at www.manginasal.com. Mang Inasal...Kumbinsing!

CONGRATULATIONS
TO THE WINNERS
m

JAZZED-UP DRIVING WITH M&M'S

M&M's Chocolates congratulates the grand prize winners of the M&M's Jazz Up Your Christmas 2 Promo. They are: Flor de Lis Clerigo, James Lim, and Michael Dennis Cruz. These winners are in for the ride of their lives when they cruise around the city in their brand new Honda Jazz. Painted in fun colors of M&M's, they will surely turn heads on the road. Watch out for the next big event of M&M's Chocolates. Let M&M's Chocolates make life sweeter.

DHL launches new regional 'All the Way' brand campaign

DHL, THE WORLD'S LEADING express and logistics company, launched its latest branding "All the Way" initiative. The campaign highlights the company's key differentiators, featuring its people and proactive service-oriented attitude to communicate the company's personal touch in everyday situations.

The core elements in the communication are: a good express provider, easy to deal with, knowing and rewarding our customers, innovation of service and product, and a global trade facilitator, in making DHL the customers' first choice. The campaign aims to reinforce DHL's tagline of going "All the Way" for customers by demonstrating that DHL is committed to playing an integral role in contributing to customers' success.

"For us, 'All the Way' means that at DHL we truly have our customers' best interests at heart and that we will go the 'extra mile' to fulfill what we have been tasked to do," DHL Express Asia Pacific senior vice president for commercial Dan McHugh said. "The campaign demonstrates different ways in which we are going 'All the Way' for our customers, to achieve our goal of becoming their first choice for all their express and logistics requirements."

The campaign showcases unique facets of DHL's quality service experience of which some customers may not know about - for example, the DHL Quality Control Centers (QCCs) that are strategically located in all Asia Pacific markets and help DHL monitor all customer shipments, 24 hours a day, to ensure seamless delivery of all shipments by anticipating any potential problems.

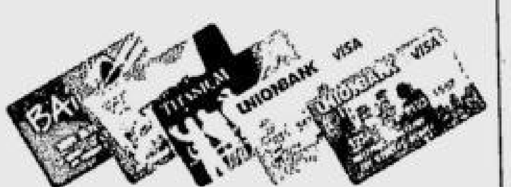
DHL Express Philippines country manager Larry Llamzon said the creative executions and testimonials for the brand campaign will give DHL's new and existing customers a deeper and closer insight into the personalized and dedicated service that DHL provides. "A major inspiration for the brand campaign were the DHL employees themselves whose inherent true life accounts to go all the way for their customers served as the foundation upon which the campaign was based on," he said.

DHL's Asia Pacific brand campaign was launched simultaneously across all countries in Asia Pacific and rolled out through a combination of print and television advertisements, outdoor placements and the campaign's official website www.allthewaydhl.com in the first quarter of 2007.

SIEMENS PHILIPPINES' NEW PRESIDENT

Siemens Philippines officially announced the appointment of Adrian Wood as the new president and CEO of the company in the recently concluded Handover Ceremony at the Rizal Ballroom of Makati Shangri-La. Tertius Vermeulen, president and CEO of Siemens Philippines for the last four years will take on new challenges as he keeps the CFO post at Siemens South Africa. Wood will also become the country head of Siemens companies in the Philippines including Siemens Inc, Siemens Power Operations, Osram and local joint venture Etsi Technologies. In photo: professor Dr. Klaus Wucherer (center), member of the corporate executive committee of Siemens AG performs the turnover ceremony and leads in a toast for the outgoing president and CEO of Siemens Philippines Tertius Vermeulen (left) and the new president and CEO of Siemens Philippines Adrian Wood (right).

ProductFILES



UnionBank Credit Cards, Western launch UnionDeals

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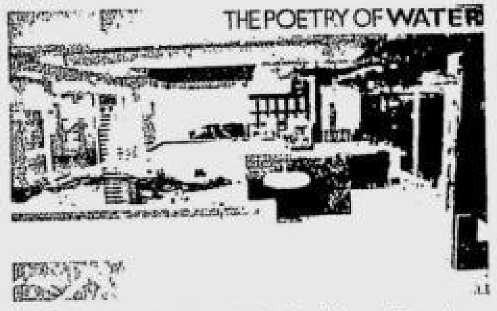

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The contributions must be unique, distinctive and must have helped achieve the agency's programs and projects.
2. Observable/Manifested Attributes
Service Orientation: a value orientation to service for the welfare of the organization; the welfare of others is uppermost as manifested by his ability and willingness to anticipate client's needs; and willingness and readiness to render an "extra mile" for the organization or stay beyond office hours even without compensation.
Professionalism and Integrity: consistent observance of the moral standard of conduct, as manifested by decisions that are well-thought of and based on ethical considerations; accepting full responsibility of one's actions; recognizing and giving credit to other's work; honoring one's commitments; keeping confidential and classified information; compliance with office rules and regulations; objectivity and fairness; discipline; and behavior that aligns with legal, moral, societal, spiritual and human values.
Loyalty to government service: ability to subordinate one's personal interest to that of the agency's or the government service's as manifested by defending and safeguarding the interest of the public in and out of the office by acting in a way that protects the image and reputation of the public service.
Excellence: consistent observance of the highest standards of performance in terms of efficiency, effectiveness, quality and timeliness as manifested by outputs that are thoroughly researched, well studied, and error-free; capacity to meet timelines and deadlines; and timeliness in making decisions and taking appropriate actions.
Courtesy: the manner by which the employee deals with other people e.g. his peers, his superiors, his subordinates, his customers and the public that he serves as manifested by politeness in words and actions; respect for the other person's time, ideas, and sensitivities; and the observance of proper protocols.

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For further details please visit the GSIS website www.gsis.gov.ph or e-mail us at sops@gsis.gov.ph or call the Corporate Services Group at telephone numbers 8916392, 8329755 and 8916001 and look for SVP Connie Madarang or VP Ruth Karunungan.

Government Service Insurance System
Kahit saan, kahit kailan maaasahan

DHL launches new regional 'All the Way' brand campaign

DHL, THE WORLD'S LEADING express and logistics company, launched its latest branding "All the Way" initiative. The campaign highlights the company's key differentiators, featuring its people and proactive service-oriented attitude to communicate the company's personal touch in everyday situations.

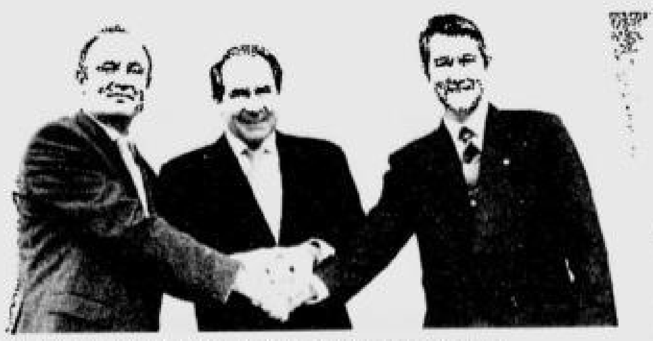
The core elements in the communication are: a good express provider, easy to deal with, knowing and rewarding our customers, innovation of service and product, and a global trade facilitator, in making DHL the customers' first choice. The campaign aims to reinforce DHL's tagline of going "All the Way" for customers by demonstrating that DHL is committed to playing an integral role in contributing to customers' success.

"For us, 'All the Way' means that at DHL we truly have our customers' best interests at heart and that we will go the 'extra mile' to fulfill what we have been tasked to do," DHL Express Asia Pacific senior vice president for commercial Dan McHugh said. "The campaign demonstrates different ways in which we are going 'All the Way' for our customers, to achieve our goal of becoming their first choice for all their express and logistics requirements."

The campaign showcases unique facets of DHL's quality service experience of which some customers may not know about - for example, the DHL Quality Control Centers (QCCs) that are strategically located in all Asia Pacific markets and help DHL monitor all customer shipments, 24 hours a day, to ensure seamless delivery of all shipments by anticipating any potential problems.

DHL Express Philippines country manager Larry Llamzon said the creative executions and testimonials for the brand campaign will give DHL's new and existing customers a deeper and closer insight into the personalized and dedicated service that DHL provides. "A major inspiration for the brand campaign were the DHL employees themselves whose inherent true life accounts to go all the way for their customers served as the foundation upon which the campaign was based on," he said.

DHL's Asia Pacific brand campaign was launched simultaneously across all countries in Asia Pacific and rolled out through a combination of print and television advertisements, outdoor placements and the campaign's official website www.allthewaydhl.com in the first quarter of 2007.



SIEMENS PHILIPPINES' NEW PRESIDENT

Siemens Philippines officially announced the appointment of Adrian Wood as the new president and CEO of the company in the recently concluded Handover Ceremony at the Rizal Ballroom of Makati Shangri-La. Tertius Vermeulen, president and CEO of Siemens Philippines for the last four years will take on new challenges as he keeps the CFO post at Siemens South Africa. Wood will also become the country head of Siemens companies in the Philippines including Siemens Inc, Siemens Power Operations, Osram and local joint venture Etsi Technologies. In photo: professor Dr. Klaus Wucherer (center), member of the corporate executive committee of Siemens AG performs the turnover ceremony and leads in a toast for the outgoing president and CEO of Siemens Philippines Tertius Vermeulen (left) and the new president and CEO of Siemens Philippines Adrian Wood (right).

Product FILES

UNIONBANK
VISA
VISA

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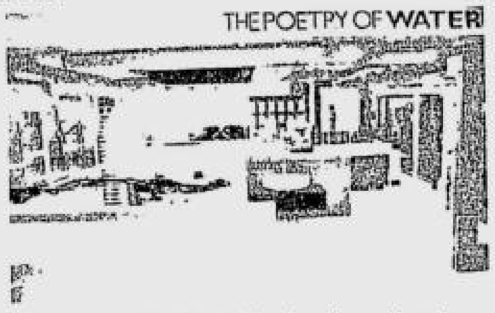

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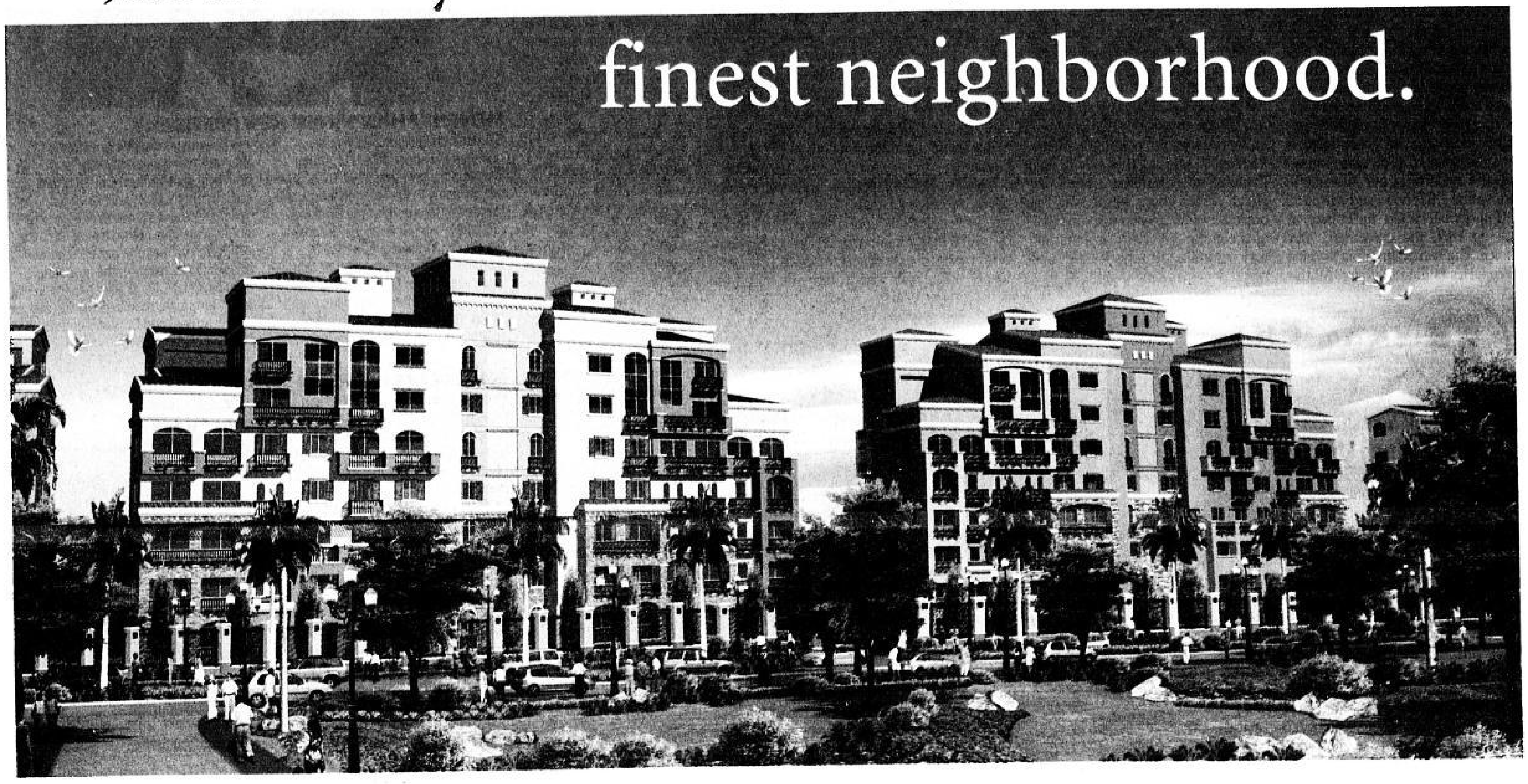

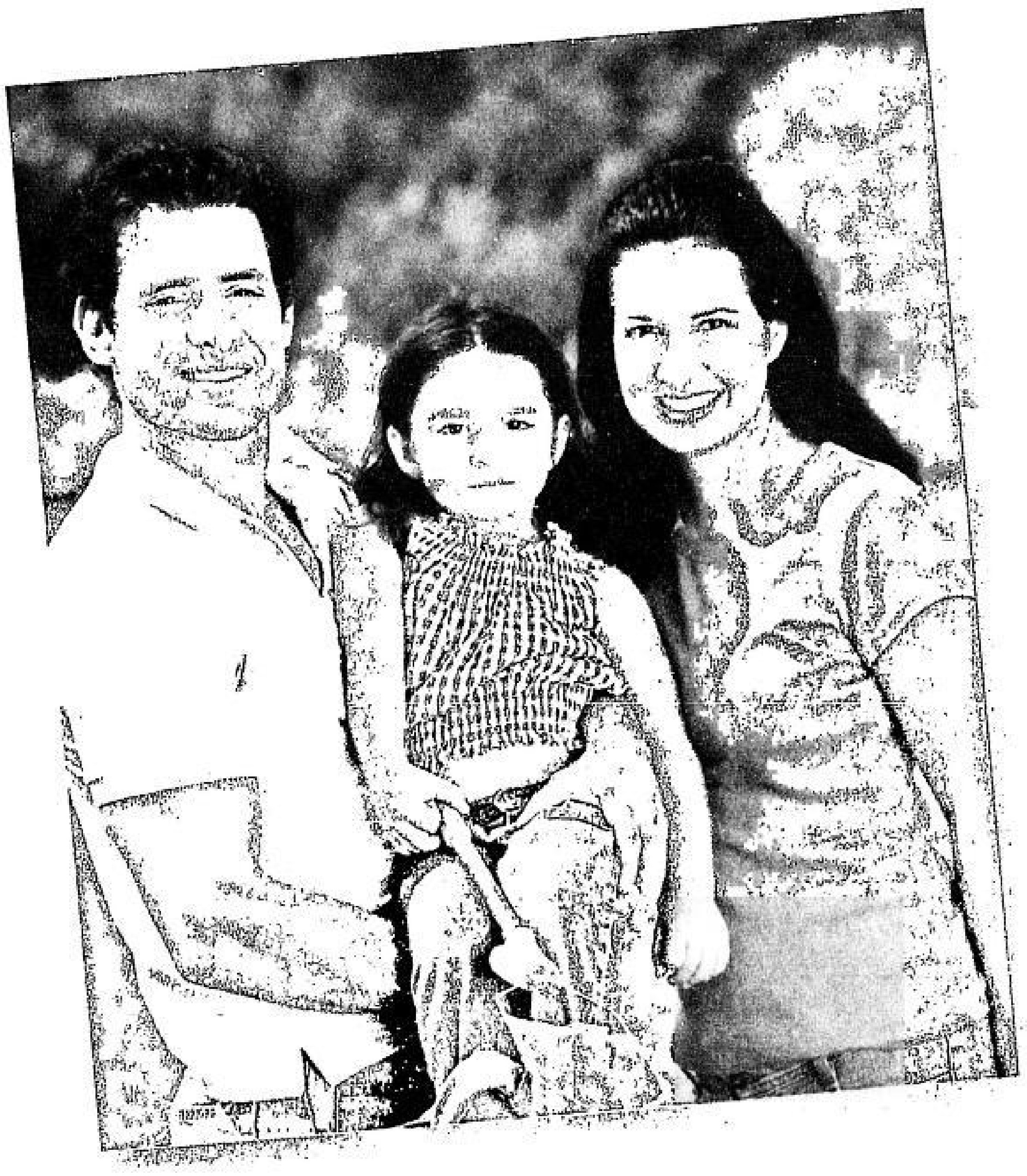

McKinley Hill
GARDEN VILLAS
Limited Edition Residences
PHASE 2

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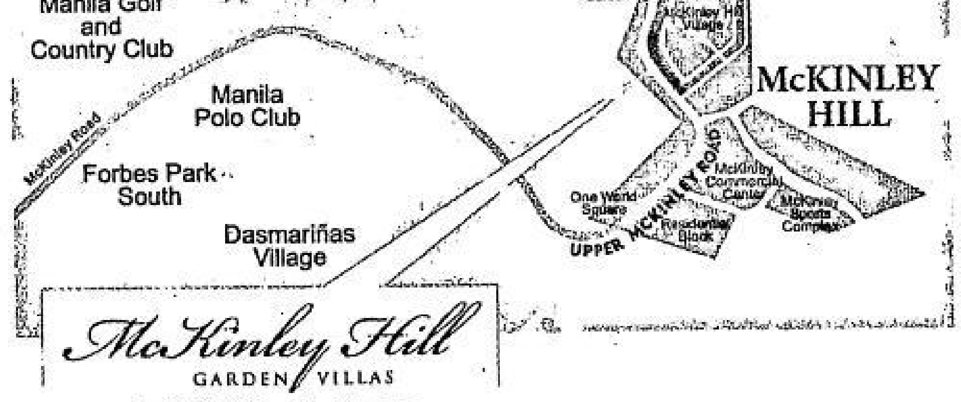
What's more, a wealth of urban conveniences surrounds you. Find first-class leisure amenities right where you live. From a swimming pool, game room and playground. To a function area and covered walkway. And get to the best of Metro Manila a few minutes away.

Step up to the country's finest community. Strictly reserved for a fortunate few. McKinley Hill Garden Villas.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Regaining the banking public's trust

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Corporate form of religion /B2-4

Exportbank moves to become 'an upbeat, medium-sized bank with a global mindset'

By Daxim L. Lucas

A BIG PART OF THE BANKING business is about developing—and keeping—the trust of one's clients. Once that trust is broken, it is a long road back to recovery.

In the local setting, that road to recovery seems especially long, given that very few banks can claim to have successfully and fully recovered from crises that put their depositors' money in danger.

One such bank, however, is pulling out all the stops to prove the statistics and naysayers wrong.

Coming off one of the most high-profile bank failures in recent years the new owners of Export and Industry Bank have their work cut out for them.

Exportbank bought, lock, stock and barrel, the remnants of the defunct Urban Bank, which collapsed under the weight of liquidity and solvency problems in 2000.

Despite generous terms from regulators, the new entity failed to make significant progress in bringing back business, with most observers saying that the former owners of Exportbank had "bitten off more than they could chew."

New money

Last year, however, new investors came into Exportbank, bringing with new money—and perhaps more importantly, new expertise.

"We're a transformed bank," said Exportbank executive vice president Douglas Chew.

Since 2005, some P3.5 billion in fresh capital from both new and existing shareholders have boosted the bank's equity accounts and balance sheet, as a whole.

"The balance sheet is completely new, and we've completed selling our nonperforming loans," Chew says, adding that the bank's roster of shareholders also bring new strengths to the institution.

Exportbank's new shareholders include AO Capital Partners, which is experienced in the Asia-Pacific region as an investment an financial advisory.

The group is particularly adept at what the bank calls "spotting opportunities and optimizing strategic relationships."

"Senior management team has over 120 years of cumulative professional experience throughout the region," according to Exportbank's statement about its new shareholder.

REGAINING/ B2-2

EXPORT BANK headquarters in Makati RODEL ROTONI

Suzuki APV.
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Suzuki APV is the seamless integration of both function and fashion. Its chic and compact design can sit up to 8 people, comfortably. Now the whole family can cruise through the city in style.

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[Tagalog] Capable of doing. KAYA [Bahasa Malaysia] Rich.
Foreign language, similar wording. Maybank Foreign parentage, local banking.

Companies move to give employees 'breathers'

HONG KONG—CHI-WON Yoon likes to leave his office by 6 p. m.—7 p. m. at the latest.

A banker with Swiss investment bank UBS, his day is far from over, what with conference calls with London and New York that will keep him busy until midnight.

But he wants to send a message to his staff that it's okay to go home.

For many managers at global companies, 70-hour weeks are becoming the norm.

Yet their firms would rather they took Yoon's approach.

Too many hours

A global study in the Harvard Business Review showed more than 50 percent of male executives and more than 80 percent of women executives working 60 hours a week or more said they would not be able to keep it up for more than a year.

Women tend to quit such jobs after a few years, the study shows.

Men often stay but more than 40 percent who worked those hours experienced "brown-out" within five years and had lost their creative zeal.

Globalization, instant communication and the huge financial rewards on offer in many top jobs are leading to "extreme" working hours, says Sylvia Ann Hewlett of the New York-based Center for Work-Life Policy and a co-author of the study.

"These factors are not going to change so companies will have to create alternative work models," Hewlett said. "But for nimble companies at the cutting edge there's an opportunity to hang on to talent if they allow breathers and restorative time."

New approaches

Hewlett said several companies are trying new things:

- American Express Co. allows top talent to apply for a two-year assignment doing high-impact projects for part of the year. "It means they can get down to, say, 40-hour workweeks for part of the year," said Hewlett.
- Network equipment provider Cisco Systems Inc. allows some staff to take 6-12 months out to work at a non-profit organization.
- Google Inc. encourages workers to spend 25 percent of their week on their own projects, free of distractions.
- Wal-Mart Stores Inc. has introduced standing-only meetings where BlackBerries are left at the door. "The point is to cut to the chase," said Hewlett.

Back at UBS, Yoon underlines his point by arriving in the office at around 9:30 a. m.—two hours after many staff.

Emphasizing sane work hours is all part of talent management for Yoon, the head of Asian equities for the Swiss firm.

"If you have the talent management right you can get the business right," he told a human resources conference hosted by his company.

It's no easy matter, though.

Executives say that as their businesses expand globally, unpredictable work demands and tight deadlines are adding pressure, while endless meetings give them little time to focus.

Less attractive

Weekly travel and back-to-back meetings also are making senior managerial positions less attractive.

"Not everyone wants to travel every week and wake up in a different hotel room. Management has got to ask: Is this person going to be happy in this job?" said Ronnie Tan, Asia managing director of Development Dimensions International, a human resources development firm.

Women in particular are being deterred from high-level careers, a trend that could have risky consequences as an aging population narrows the talent pool.

"Women are backing off because they see these extreme jobs and losing women from the talent pipeline is going to become an issue with an aging population," said Hewlett.

Reuters

Foreign policy's role in improving competitiveness

MAPping THE FUTURE

Albert F. Del Rosario

THE MANAGEMENT ASSOCIAtion of the Philippines is a 57-year-old association committed to promoting management excellence.

We have nearly 800 members representing a cross-section of CEOs and COOs from leading domestic and multinational companies including senior officials and the academe.

For 2007, our theme is "Country Above Self."

Our major thrust is good governance with considerable emphasis on competitiveness for both the private and public sectors, and our aim is to advance the practice and promotion of leadership by example to benefit the country.

With so much on the table, the question to ask is, how can I make a difference in terms of what needs to be done and how I can be more competitive?

Reinforcement needed

At the recent Philippine Development Forum, I was asked by the government to speak for the private sector.

In one instance, I recalled that in one of our road shows with credit rating agencies we had been highly complimented for excellence in our rhetoric.

In the same breath, however, it was also suggested that our ability to execute needed to be badly reinforced.

If you agree that execution requires primary focus and is a major challenge to be addressed to improve our competitiveness, you are then enabling us to humbly share, as suggested, our Washington experiences.

Washington DC was a posting where there were already a significant number of challenges to address in the first place, and much more that could be done if one were disposed to creating and pursuing additional opportunities.

To provide execution and delivery, we needed to begin with both a mind-set and a resolve.

To make up for my zero diplomatic skills and experience, I needed to make a threefold commitment to our people and to myself: That I would endeavor to work and study harder than any ambassador they had ever seen; that we would fight with all our might to promote and protect Filipino interest; and that we would raise the bar for credible representation of the Philippines in the United States.

Good people

By fully adhering to my commitments throughout the five years, I relied on the expectation that our good people at the Embassy and those in the 11 Consulates would positively respond to leadership by example.

They did so with a strong spirit of patriotism and professionalism. With this assured response, we gained more confidence to make possible our embracing a new culture of reaching beyond our grasp.

To do more, we needed to expand our sphere of influence.

For the first time in Philippine history, with the help of many of our friends, we organized a US Congressional Caucus of 80 members to promote the interest not only of the Philippines but also of the Filipinos in America.

At the same time, we worked on increasing our alliances with the US Senate and in various departments of the Executive Branch.

We also traveled far and wide to 40 states and nearly twice as many cities to develop close friendships with the Filipino-American Associations in the US so that we could help each other in times of need.

We furthermore established close ties with the business communities, the think tanks, paying special attention to the media.

Stronger country team

We therefore became a stronger country team because we were able to rely on many allies and friends to work with us.

With President Arroyo's outstanding leadership in foreign policy and her support for our initiatives, we are now able to provide a few examples of what our country team was able to accomplish on traditional issues to benefit the country:

1) Our President's participation in three presidential visits in five years including one state visit to DC. In five years, President Bush had only four state visits, President Arroyo being one of them.

Deliverables of each visit from the private and public sectors were in the billions of dollars, meeting the President's expectations.

2) In defense and security, from 2001 to 2003, our FMF from US Congress increased by 2500 percent.

In addition to training and equipment assistance by way of helicopters, trucks, riffles, naval boats and others, we institutionalized a reform program for the AFP valued at $400M on a co-sharing basis. We also started a transformation plan for the PNP.

3) In development assistance, for a three-year period of beginning 2001, we effected an increase of 250 percent a year.

4) In total assistance from 2001 and 2006, we reached a total of $1.2 billion. In 2006, we achieved a record high of $228 million, the highest since the nonrenewal of the bases agreement.

5) In terms of investments, during our watch, ICT outsourcing to the Philippines in 2001 generated 2400 employees with revenues of $24 Million.

Just rewards

In 2005, the number of employees grew to 170,000 with revenues to the Philippines of $2.5 billion, 87 percent of which was generated by US companies.

The fact that we were able to invite PLDT to work with the Embassy and the DTI to help us market the Philippines as a preferred ICT outsourcing location makes for a good example of public-private sector partnership.

In addition to working on traditional issues, the country team proactively undertook new initiatives, which were totally out of any radar screen, to produce bonus benefits to the people of the Philippines.

Among these were:

1) Generating $30 Million for the MILF Peace Process from US Congress.

2) Reinstating the Philippines as an attractive global investment destination as certified by Calpers.

3) Averting the demise of the Philippine canned tuna industry.

4) Conducting a successful remittance campaign in 2005 for a 32 percent increase.

5) Conducting a successful realty development road shows over six cities with Philippine property developers to further enhance the level of remittances.

6) Assisting in the successful dropping of the legal cases involving Philippine telecom companies.

7) Launching of the first Ambassador's and Consuls General tour which brought 528 visitors. According to DOT, this was the largest tour group from North America.

In closing, one of the lasting impressions that I have happily brought with me as I left the service is the strong patriotism and utmost dedication of my colleagues in the United States.

Several of them who have fully supported, and at all times inspired me, are here today in the persons of Evan Garcia, Jocelyn Garcia, Lingling Lacanlale, Cecile Rebong, Weng Sanchez, Blesi Cabrera and Lori Yparraguirre.

If I were to put up a dream team, they would certainly be among my first choices.

To reinforce focus, improving global competitiveness is not only a challenge for the private sector, but it also applies to the public sector. It behooves us to continue reaching beyond our grasp.

In the US, we endeavored to lead in the best way we knew how. If there is a belief that we achieved some measure of success, it is because we gave all and we did all to demonstrate that we truly love our country.

At the end of the day, country above self with full focus on leadership by example is what effective governance is all about.

(From a speech delivered by the author during the 2007 DFA Policy Consultations with all Ambassadororial Heads of Post on March 22, 2007. The author is president of the MAP and chair of Gotuaco del Rosario & Associates. Feedback at mapsec@globenet.com.ph.)

Regaining the banking ...

From page B2-1

Exportbank's other main owner is the Raiffeisen Zentralbank Österreich AG (RZB) Group of Austria. RZB is Austria's third largest banking group, and has been successful in tapping emerging markets in Central and Eastern Europe with its customer-focused approach.

A significant portion of the bank's equity is also owned by Hong Kong-based Lippo Group which is known for investment banking, property development, food manufacturing, commercial banking and other financial services.

Together, these three shareholders want to make Exportbank into "an upbeat, medium-sized bank with a global mindset."

Upbeat bank

Chew, who himself used to work for RZB in Singapore, says the key is managing the bank's risk profile—a key element which was blamed for the collapse of Urban Bank seven years ago.

"We have invested in an asset and liability management system," he said, explaining that doing so will allow management to know Exportbank's exact risk profile—whether it is carrying too much or too little risk—at any given time.

The bank prides itself as being one of the first to deploy an asset and liability management system in the country, and is now fully compliant with the new Basle 2 banking conventions and International Accounting Standard (IAS) rules.

According to Chew, the bank will start by "deploying its accounts more efficiently," given that its capital adequacy ratio presently stands at approximately 20 percent. This is a full eight percentage points above what the central bank requires.

While it means that Exportbank is awash with cash, it also means that a significant amount of cash that has yet to lent out and used more productively.

For Exportbank executive vice president Juan Victor S. Tanjuatco, that means lending out more money to clients, but in a more judicious fashion.

"We want to build our relationships with our clients," he says, noting that the mid-sized bank does not intend to compete head-on with the country's top universal banks. "We want to broaden the profile of the organization and its clients."

New markets

Tanjuatco says that the bank will target certain business segments, including portions of the property market and the information technology sector which are driving the country's economic growth.

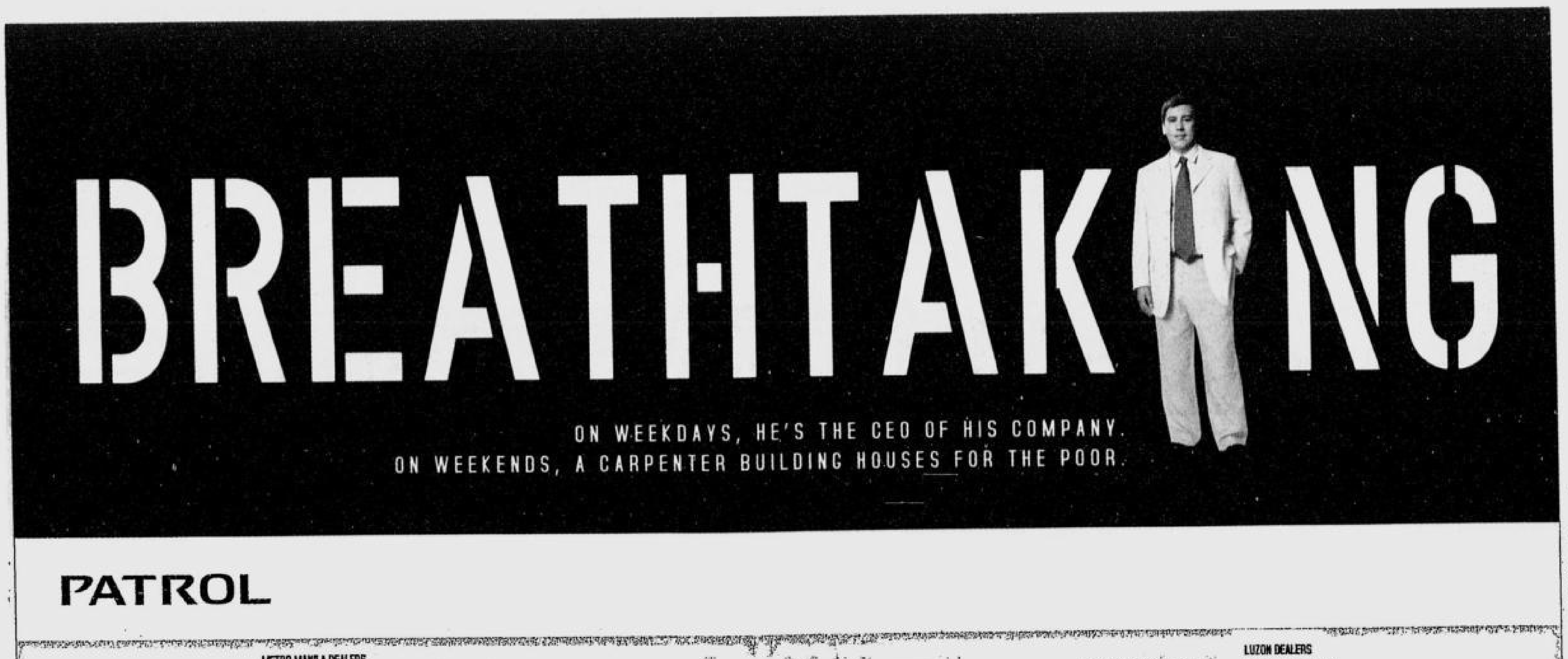
"We are also targeting the premium middle market," he said.

With all these reforms, Chew and Tanjuatco are hoping the the banking public would sit up and take notice.

As it is, banking under prevailing conditions is difficult enough.

Exportbank's management realizes that it will even be more challenging, given the bank's history. The road back to regaining the public's trust it will be no walk in the park

"We are a new bank," Chew says. "But we walk the talk."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CEO Clubs Worldwide expanding to RP

DUBBED AS "THE MILLIONaires' Club" with over 10,000 members in the United States, China, Korea, Japan, India, Pakistan and the Middle East, the CEO Clubs Worldwide is expanding into the Philippines.

This was announced by Filipino-American Susan Barlin shortly after signing an agreement with the CEO Clubs Worldwide for the opening in Manila of CEO Club Philippines in June.

"This development will enable Philippine businesses and CEOs to access the vast global resources of CEO Clubs Worldwide and its expertise in various fields," Barlin said after signing the agreement at the recently concluded World CEO Forum in Abu Dhabi.

The signing was held at the Emirates Palace, the world's only seven-star hotel, where Barlin was named president of CEO Club Philippines.

Barlin is a founding member of the CEO Clubs and chief executive officer of the Barlin Group of Companies.

With Barlin at the World CEO Forum were officers of the CEO Clubs, CMO Council, Global Fluency, British Business Clubs and Dubai Business Expo, among others.

They were led by Salah Selah Bin Omair Al Shamsi, director general of the Abu Dhabi Chamber of Commerce and Industry, who successfully hosted a business networking event.

CEO forum in Manila

Barlin is looking forward to bringing the World CEO Forum to Manila next year to introduce the country's CEOs to this prestigious global organization.

The launch of the forum in Manila is also scheduled this June, when delegates of all CEO Clubs around the world will arrive to support the event.

"Membership to the CEO Club is by invitation only, but those who think they can bring value to the organization may contact ceo@aireec.com," Barlin said.

Keen on pouring their resources in any business opportunity anywhere in the world, members of the CEO Clubs are also among those flocking to Manila for the 1st Asian International Real Estate Expo and Conference (AIREEC) slated at the Philippine International Convention Center (PICC) on Dec. 6 to 10 this year.

"And many of them are joining AIREEC in search of investment opportunities in property development ventures in tropical Asia," said Barlin, also president liaison to the Philippines of the National Association of Realtors (NAR), the voice of real estate in the US.

Showcase in Manila

Barlin is the proponent of AIREEC, which is geared to bring the world's real estate and tourism-related industries to Manila to showcase Asia as a global second home destination.

Expected to join AIREEC are 400 exhibitors and 5,000 delegates from various sectors of the real estate industry in Australia, Europe, North America, Northeast Asia, Central America, Middle East, Southeast Asia, South America and the Indian peninsula.

Organized by Expo, Convention and Promotions Inc. (ECPI) and supported by the Philippine Departments of Foreign Affairs and Tourism, AIREEC will provide local and foreign participants the fastest way to achieve global presence, build up image, open new markets, gain new partners, learn about competitors, widen network, initiate sales and get a feel of the world's business environment. For questions, 7292477, or e-mail info@aireec.com, or visit www.aireec.com).

Aggressive marketing presentation to collaborators since January has led to 40 percent space booking for the exhibition. Even Khazahkstan is joining AIREEC to introduce its investment opportunities to the world. Over 1,500 attendees have also registered for AIREEC during a two-month campaign in the US alone.

Middle East, Europe

"We have started Middle East and Europe which yielded more partnerships and collaborations. Experts from companies like Pramerica, Colliers International, Jones Lang LaSalle, DTZ and various others are coming over to speak about what global investors and buyers need to know. The worldwide promotional tours for AIREEC is a major advantage for sponsors, especially the 'early birds,' whose projects stand to benefit from such vast market exposure," Barlin said.

"AIREEC will visit 27 countries and the last stop of the campaign is in November at the Venetian Hotel, Las Vegas where AIREEC will be host to the International Networking Cocktail of the National Association of Realtors' 100th Year Celebration and Convention. And we will definitely bring our sponsors with us. So visit the AIREEC website for the latest updates on who are aboard," Barlin added.

Can TV quiz . . .

From page B2-4

number of people," he said.

Leading commercial broadcaster ITV Plc said viewers enjoyed its interactive quiz shows, with about 90 percent calling less than 10 times a day.

"But we are not complacent about this. We have an in-house customer service team who constantly monitor call patterns, proactively contacting callers who demonstrate unusual activity," a spokesperson said in an e-mailed statement.

Participants receive a warning message on their phone after making 10 calls to a show, while presenters give on-air advice about setting a limit on the number of attempts, she added.

Loss of trust

But concern over the cost of calls and how they are handled has cast a shadow over the industry, prompting ITV, Channel 4 and Channel 5 to suspend premium rate interactive services to allow independent reviews.

Producers of the long-running BBC television children's show 'Blue Peter' last week also apologized for faking a phone-in competition.

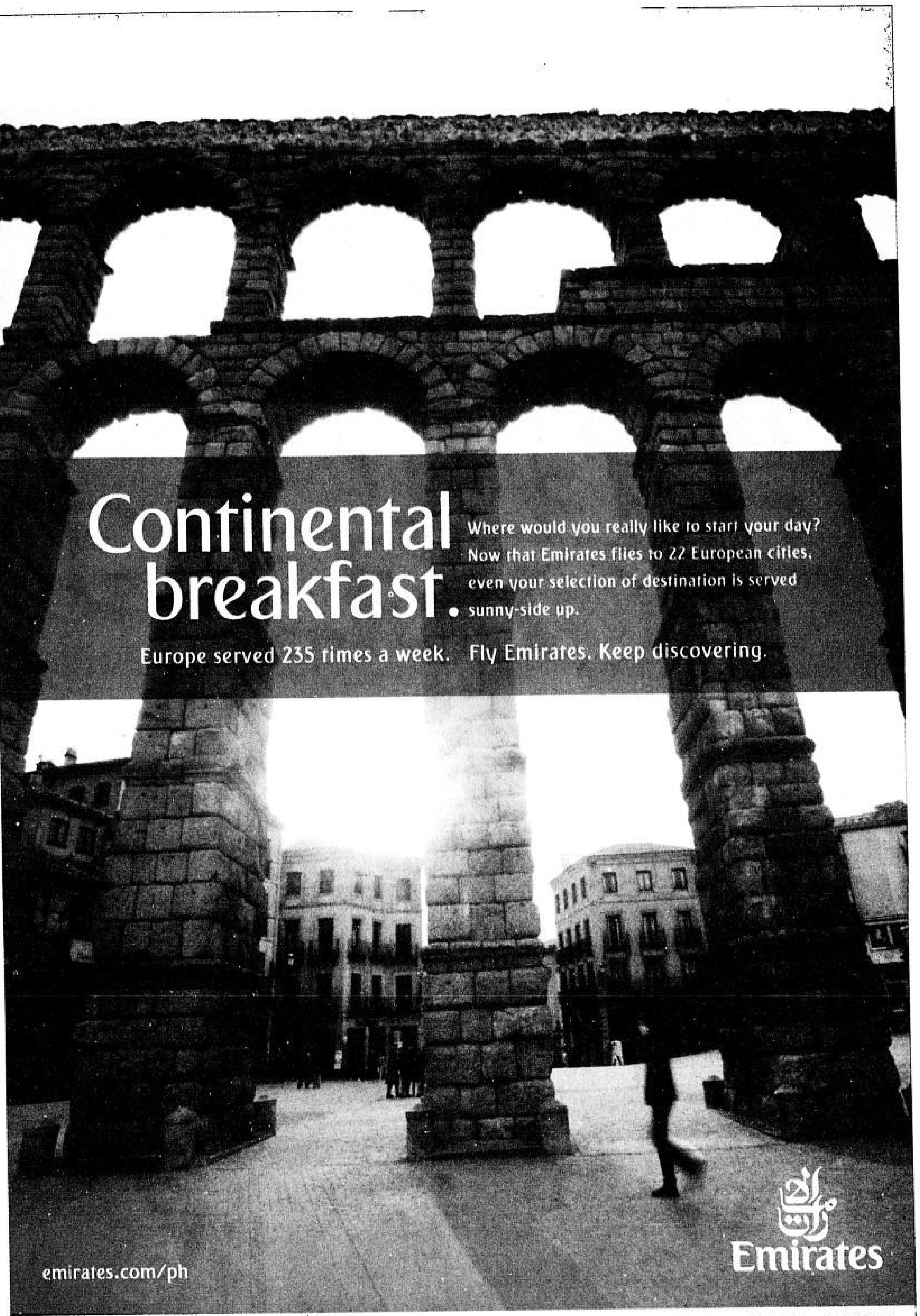
ICSTIS is preparing to introduce new rules to better safeguard callers.

In addition, the Gambling Commission is considering whether interactive TV quiz shows should fall under new gambling legislation that comes into force in September.

Adding to the momentum, a parliamentary select committee on media recommended in January that interactive TV call shows should constitute gaming. It also urged the Gambling Commission to look into the scale of possible addiction.

Ellison, for her part, said she welcomed the push to tighten up quiz game practices, recalling how she used to spend up to 150 pounds a night on the shows before her landline and then mobile phone were disconnected. She now has a pay-as-you-go mobile, and spends up to 60 pounds a week.

Reuters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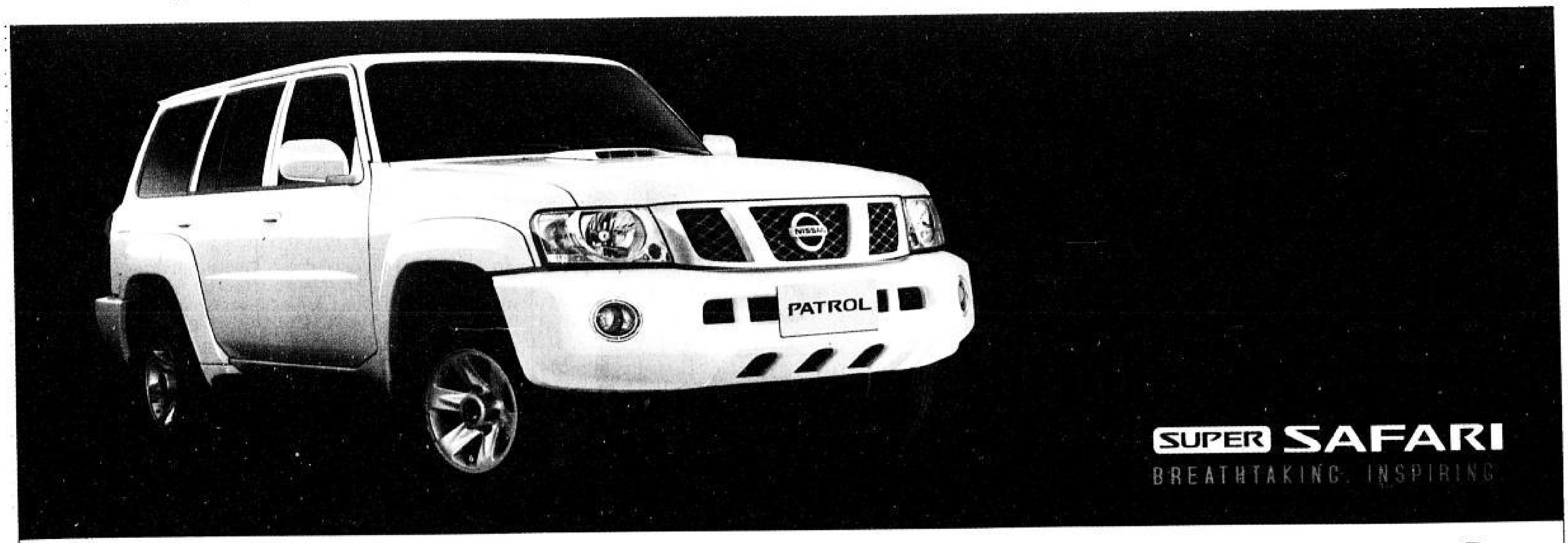

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Raul Palabrica

BEELINES ARE QUIETLY FORMING at the offices of the country's major (read: influential) religious organizations.

No, it has nothing to do with the coming Holy Week.

This otherwise sacrosanct event has become anything but that. It has evolved into a convenient excuse to go abroad or spend time in the seaside resorts.

In the queue are candidates for the national and local positions that are up for grabs in the May 14 elections.

For senatorial aspirants, the road leads to the headquarters of Iglesia Ni Kristo, El Shaddai and other religious groups that have nationwide membership.

The wannabees for local offices have to worry only about "paying their respects" to the religious leaders in their localities.

Next to barangay leaders, the pastors, ministers, elders or what-have-you of religious organizations are expected to be the subject of special attention by the candidates between now and Election Day.

Organizations

To date, the records of the Securities and Exchange Commission show that 12,687 religious corporations have been issued certificates of registration, broken down as follows: 12,587 religious societies and 100 corporation soles.

Both kinds of organizations aim to propagate the teachings of a religion or administer the activities of their members who have common spiritual beliefs.

The focus of their worship or belief is a God, deity, hero, person (alive or deceased) or inanimate objects.

For Christians and Muslims, that would be Jesus Christ or Allah, respectively. The Buddhists find solace from the teachings of Gautama Buddha. The Shintoists, Hindus and animists have their own objects of veneration.

What differentiates a religious society from a corporation sole is the manner their affairs or activities are administered.

As its name denotes, a corporation sole has only one incorporator—the chief archbishop, bishop, priest, minister, rabbi or other presiding elder of the religious denomination, sect or church.

By his or her lonesome self, that person administers and manages, in the capacity of a trustee, the affairs, properties and financial resources of the religious organization.

On the other hand, a religious society is organized by a group of persons and is supervised by a board of trustees that consists of not less than five but not more than 15 members.

Separate personality

The biggest religious group in the country, the Roman Catholic Church, is not registered as a corporation sole or religious society.

In a decision that dates back to the 1900s, the Supreme Court has ruled that "the Roman Catholic Church, unlike other religious societies or churches in the Philippines, has been recognized as a juridical person since time immemorial."

While the Catholic Church may not have been formally incorporated as an institution, many of its dioceses and bishoprics in different parts of the country are separately registered as corporation sole.

Strictly speaking, anybody or any group of people can engage in religious or spiritual activities without having to apply for registration with the SEC. The right to worship is guaranteed by our Constitution.

In spite of that constitutional protection, however, organizers or leaders of religious groups prefer to incorporate to enjoy the privileges that go with that status.

As a corporation endowed with a juridical personality, their organization can acquire or sell property, borrow money from banks, enter into contracts and engage in any activity that corporations are allowed under our laws.

For religious corporations that consider solemnizing marriages a significant (nay, lucrative) part of their operation, that status is critical to their application with the National Library for authority to conduct valid and binding nuptials.

And once incorporated, a religious corporation can exist forever, unless it sets a time frame for its existence or decides to dissolve itself by its own accord. The same privilege is not enjoyed by stock or nonstock corporations whose term of existence is limited to 50 years at any one time.

Liberality

Religious corporations also have an edge when it comes to the filing of their by-laws or rules of internal procedure.

The SEC gives them as much as leeway as possible, short of violating our civil or criminal laws, in determining how they want to run their organization within the context of their religious beliefs.

What can one say when an incorporator of a religious organization claims that their by-laws represent the will of God and are therefore beyond human questioning?

While religious corporations are treated with liberality, they have to abide by the rules of the SEC on matters that require the documentation of changes in their organization.

If the head of a corporation sole decides to retire or resign his post and pass on the leadership to his successor, he has to get the SEC's prior approval, otherwise the power transfer is invalid.

Same thing with the amendment of any of the provisions of the Articles of Incorporation—the religious organization is obliged to get SEC clearance for that action.

Either a state of religiosity has descended on our country or many of our countrymen have discovered the benefits of registering religious organizations, the thing is, at least one application of that nature is filed with the SEC every business day.

(For feedback, please write to rpalabrica@inquirer.com.ph)

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Can TV quiz be addicting?

LONDON—CALLING TELEVISION quiz shows in the hope of winning big money cost Julie Ellison nearly $8,000 in phone bills over 18 months and she never won a penny, but still she keeps on trying.

Thousands of people in Britain take part in interactive quiz programs, but Ellison, who is housebound after being injured in a fire two years ago, is one of an unknown number who say they have become addicted to them.

"I want to win," the 38-year-old, from the northern city of Manchester, told Reuters by telephone: She only started calling because she needed money to buy a mobility scooter.

"With what I spent (on phone calls) I could have bought one anyway," she said. Her bills totaled 4,000 pounds ($7,744).

Britain's television industry is at the center of a storm amid allegations of rigged or overpriced phone-ins for talent contests and quizzes, prompting broadcasters to suspend some shows as they review the system.

The shows—including contests offering viewers the chance to vote for their favorite performers—have grown rapidly in Britain and beyond. Companies behind them make money by charging a premium rate on the cost of calls.

Premium phone rate services watchdog ICSTIS says the services in Britain generated a total of about 1.2 billion pounds in revenue in 2006.

While Britons are apathetic when it comes to choosing political leaders, the hope of picking their favorite celebrity or winning a prize has enticed them to call up in their droves.

This has raised fears that quiz games, in particular, are a potentially addictive form of gambling.

"Interactive television quiz shows share many of the dimensions of interactive television gambling, and also raise the same types of concern when talking about vulnerable and susceptible populations," Mark Griffiths, a professor of gambling studies, wrote in a paper entitled "Interactive television quizzes as gambling: A cause for concern?"

Symptoms of addiction include if the TV quiz becomes the most important thing in a person's life, not playing brings on withdrawal symptoms and they feel the need to play the game ever more frequently, he said.

Griffiths, of Nottingham Trent University, has not yet met anyone who fits his criteria, but said: "There are lots of people out there who are spending lots of money."

Compulsive viewing

GamCare, a charity for gambling addicts, says it has not received a significant number of complaints from individuals hooked on interactive TV quiz shows, but adds this could be because viewers do not know where to turn. "It is an area that is being investigated," a spokesperson said.

But Promis, a firm that offers counseling to beat addictions, is convinced TV call shows—with their smiling presenters, seemingly easy questions and cash prizes of up to 100,000 pounds—are a form of addictive gambling.

It says they have infiltrated a new section of the population, such as the elderly and some women, who would never think to enter a casino or gamble online.

Also, people might not think of phoning a TV show from home—at a cost of between 75 pence and 150 pence a time—as a form of gambling, said Robin Lefever, director of Promis. "I think it has damaged a huge

CAN TV/ B2-2

BUSINESS*Monday*

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RP hotels put on a fresh new face

Some add a Filipino touch

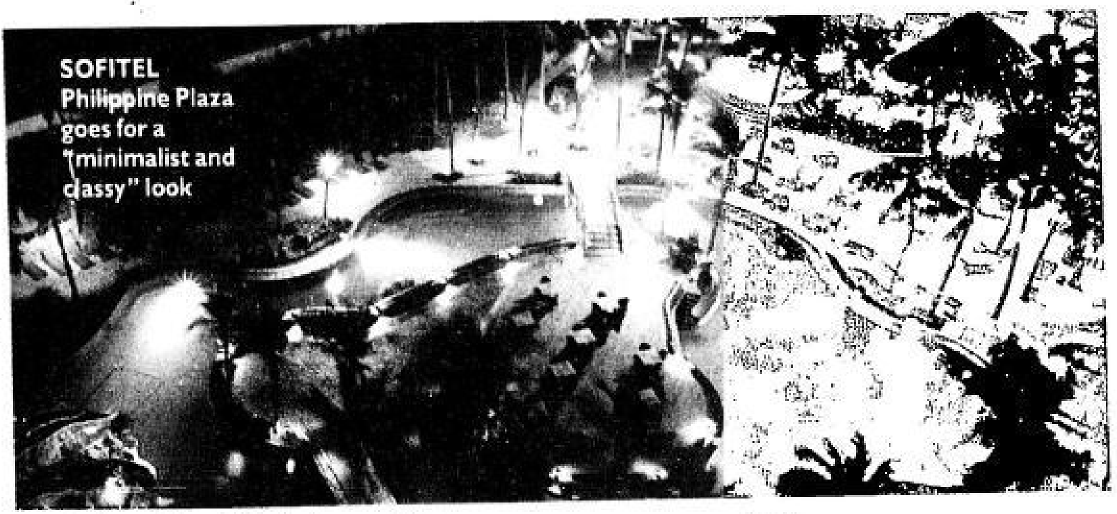
By Tina Arceo-Dumlao

THE BOOM IN the property sector is not limited to condominiums, office buildings and leisure farms. The hotel industry is in the throes of its own surge.

Because of the slow but steady growth in the Philippine economy, a renovation fever is raging across some of the country's business and resort hotels.

More and more hotels are adopting new designs, investing in the latest interior decoration and are opening up new concept restaurants to attract the influx of visitors from abroad and retain the loyalty of fickle local clients.

The INQUIRER features here some of the hotels that are sporting a whole new look.



SOFITEL Philippine Plaza goes for a "minimalist and classy" look

The Peninsula Manila

"Timeless Filipino" is the theme that The Peninsula Manila has adopted for its hotel-wide renovation.

THE PENINSULA Manila gives guests a "timeless Filipino" ambience.

Warm wood, locally-sourced and high quality rattan furniture now take pride of place in the guest rooms.

The local flavor is further enhanced by the artwork, which features stylized photographs of typical Filipino life, handicrafts and creativity.

Peninsula Manila general manager David Batchelor says the Filipino touches appeal to guests wanting a taste of what the country they are in has to offer.

The first phase of the renovation was completed at the end of 2006, which covered the guest rooms and suites in the Makati Tower. Work on the Ayala Tower rooms will be completed next year.

"We want the rooms to identify closely with the country," Batchelor says, "that's why we have capiz, coconut, woven elements and fabrics on the bed runners, for instance."

"We think of it as contemporary with an Asian feel," he adds.

Function rooms have also been given a facelift, especially the Rigodon Ballroom. The Lobby was also upgraded, with the décor combining soft furnishings with floral arrangements.

"A great deal of work has taken place, with the end-result a hotel that only we—but the entire country—can be proud of, and which will attract substantial domestic patronage as well as internation-

RP HOTELS/ B2-2

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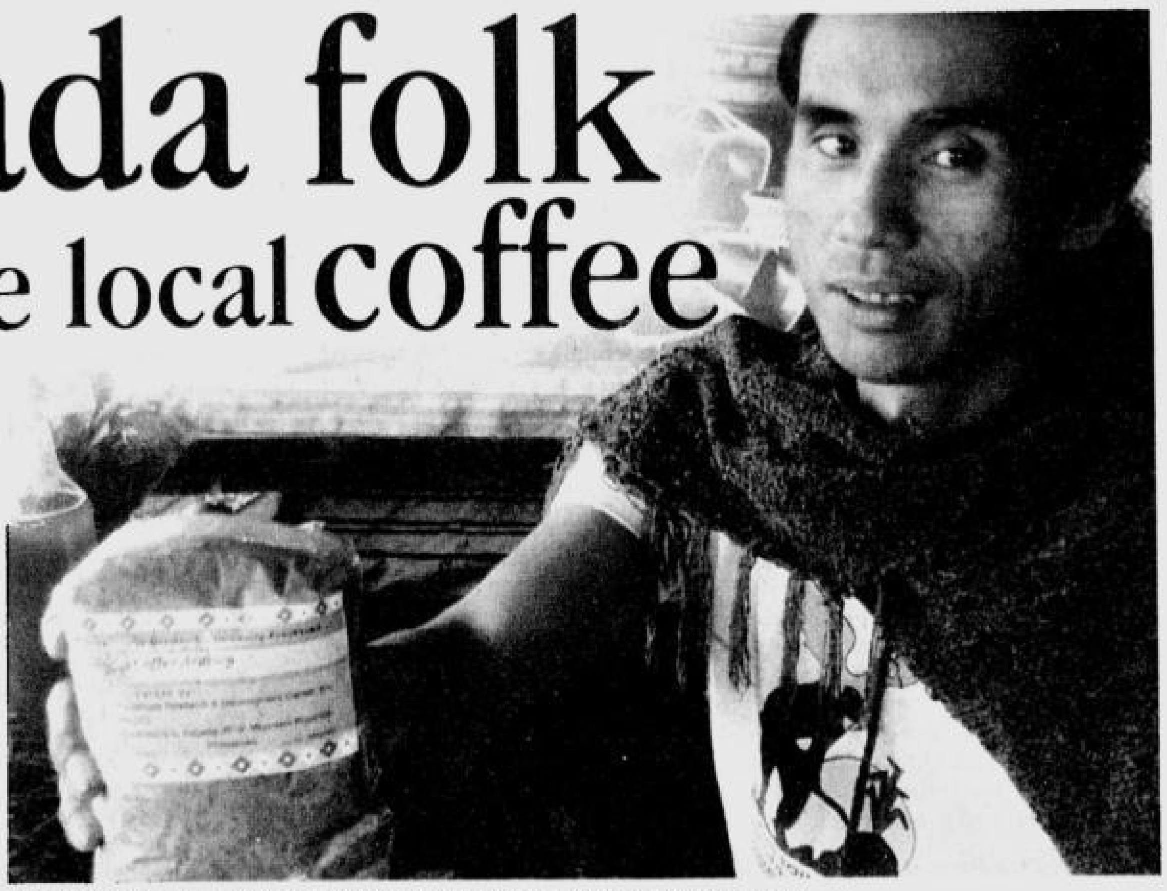
Sagada folk promote local coffee



SAGADA tries to draw more tourists with its homegrown arabica beans.

By Desiree Caluza
Inquirer Northern Luzon

SAGADA, MT. PROVINCE—When you are in this mountain resort town, every day is a good day for coffee.

The nippy mornings, with temperatures dropping to 7 degrees Celsius, were bonuses to the celebration of the town fiesta last month where the local coffee was highlighted through the launching of the Sagada Coffee Council.

During the launch, residents and tourists enjoyed sipping black coffee and cappuccino, worth P10-P25 a cup, and brewed from Arabica beans produced in this known. Some had their coffee in between bites of lemon pie and bread with blueberry jam.

Booths sold Arabica coffee beans for P150 for every 250-gram pack.

Elizabeth Wallang, agriculture technologist of the local agriculture office, says they were confident that Sagada's Arabica coffee could compete locally and internationally.

"Residents used to harvest and prepare coffee only for social gatherings, but when they saw its potential to expand as an industry, they formed their own cooperatives," she says.

Wallang, a member of the coffee council, says she had validated the potential of local viability to penetrate the market after she conducted a consumer preference study in 2003 for her thesis in agribusiness at the University of the Philippines in Los Baños, Laguna.

For her study, she served coffee, which was sourced from different provinces, to adults aged between 18 and 27, including elders of Mt. Province and asked which they preferred.

Wallang says many of her respondents preferred the taste and aroma of the Tipica Arabica coffee grown in Barangay Fidelisan here.

25.00
per cup
Cappuccino

CAPUCCINO SAGADA STYLE is worth only P25 when brewed using their homegrown beans.
PHOTOS BY DESIREE CALUZA

Most coffee trees in the town are raised in backyards.

Wallang, however, says local farm owners had allotted three hectares of land to raise coffee trees following the creation of the coffee council.

She says Sagada has 6,000 coffee trees, most of which are in the northern part of the town. The council is planning to devote 950 hectares of land for coffee production.

"The market is not the problem; it's the supply. We ourselves are having a hard time satisfying the local demand," Wallang says.

The coffee council, a multi-sectoral group composed of representative from farmers' groups, religious organizations, government, academe and nongovernment organizations, is campaigning to make Sagada coffee popular.

Presidential Assistant for Cordillera Affairs Thomas Killip, a former Sagada mayor and a member of the council, says they wanted to establish a steady market for coffee farmers of Sagada.

"One of the functions of the council is to serve as a center of coffee information and to recommend policies to advocate and educate and to provide proper education on how to produce coffee—from planting to harvesting," Killip says.

"We want to provide the farmers link to the market and to try to ensure the quality at the local level. We also want to ensure the protection of the industry," he says.

Unlike vegetable, coffee is not affected by global policies and is more sustainable, Killip says.

"We are trying to inform farmers that coffee can improve biodiversity. It is a type that could go well with dipterocarp forest and can grow between pine trees. It has a good market, like Japan and China," he says.

Basil Reyes, president of the Serenity Coffee Corp., a firm that buys coffee beans, says they are bringing the coffee beans of Fidelisan to Switzerland this year for the "coffee and tea world cup."

"Philippine coffee is good. From north to south, we are full of coffee, we are in a coffee belt;" Reyes says.

Five-star hotel opens in Bora at $210 a night

BORACAY ISLAND IN AKLAN is a five-star beach that deserves a five-star hotel.

The Discovery Group claims that its Discovery Shores, which just recently opened its doors to the public, is one such a hotel.

The only hotel in the Philippines so far to make it to the select group of Small Luxury Hotels of the World, Discovery Shores opened last March 20, and 40 suites designed by Budji Layug + Royal Pineda Architecture Planning and Interior Design will be initially available to patrons at about $210 a night.

Annabella Santos-Wisniewski, chief of executive of Discovery Shores manager HSAI-Raintree, tells the INQUIRER in an interview that the hotel was conceived to cater to high net worth individuals who have so far been "underserved" in Boracay.

"We want to raise the bar and provide this market with the type of place they are used to staying in," Wisniewski explains.

Designed by W.V. Coscolluela and Associates, Discovery Shores complements the natural beauty of Boracay with its white exterior and wide, open spaces to take full advantage of the sea, sand, sun and sky.

She adds that by providing a five-star facility on the island, Boracay will further secure its place among the top tourist destinations in the world.

Boracay Island is the Philippines' top tourist draw mainly due to its unparalleled powder-fine sand and rich marine life.

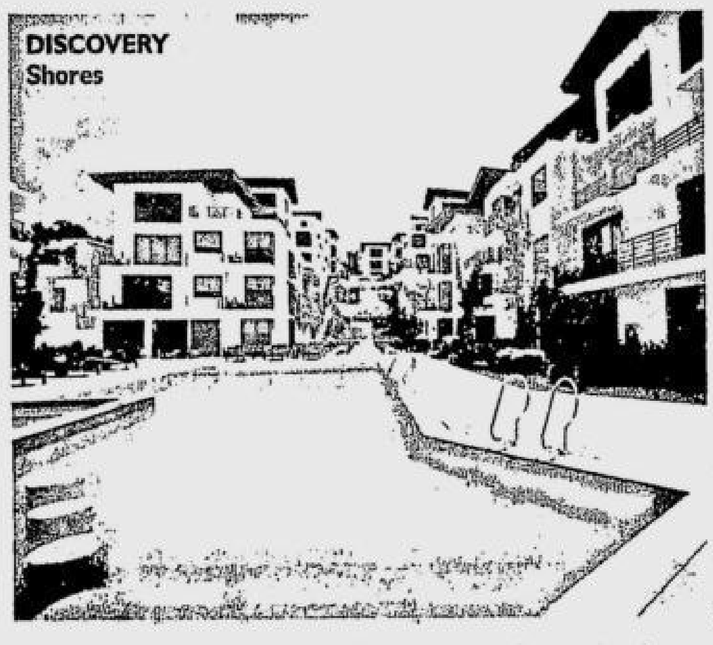
"Our competition is not really the local hotels but those in other countries," Wisniewski says, "we are attempting to bring in a new market with Discovery Shores."

Discovery Shores is the latest addition to the hotels owned and developed by The Discovery Leisure Company.

Its other hotels are the Discovery Suites in Ortigas and Discovery Country Suites in Tagaytay City.

From the initial 40 suites, Discovery Shores will expand to its full complement of 88 guestrooms by October this year. It will also have a Discovery Mandala Spa, a Sandbar beach bar, pool bar, library and Sandbox kiddie lounge.

Tina Arceo-Dumlao



Web portal boosts small firms' role in RP tourism

A LOCAL TOUR GUIDE AND car rental operator based in Vigan may not have the knowledge or the resources to promote their services to a potential tourist from the other side of the continent. But soon, even those tasty empanadas created by the town's manangs can be a byword in the ever-growing global village concept created by Internet technology.

For those who are interested to climb the High Peak in Palauig, Zambales - considered the highest point in Central Luzon at 2,030 meters - can now start with "a click of a mouse" by visiting www.HopAround.net, a web portal offering Internet visibility to micro-entrepreneurs in the country, along with the capacity to provide tourism services to local and foreign travelers.

"Entrepreneurs engaged in the tourism industry from all over the country will soon be given a 'voice' and a 'face' in the worldwide web for all travelers to see with the launch of HopAround," said Philip Camara, president of HopAround.net.

Micro entrepreneurs in Palauig and nearby Iba who provide 4x4 vehicles, packed meals, camping gear, personal guides, and more, can now make their services visible in the Internet by registering at HopAround.net.

"HopAround's basic advocacy is 'Local Economy for Local People'. The web portal will create new business opportunities for micro-entrepreneurs, referred to as Micro Tourism Service Providers (MTSP), who can provide transport, lodging, meals, guides, gear, packaged tours among others, for tourists," said Philip.

Because the MTSPs are from the area, they have extensive knowledge of their particular locations and therefore know the most scenic destinations, the most interesting local culture sites, the best out-of-the-way local fare eateries, the most knowledgeable personal guides, the cleanest and most comfortable lodgings, and at the most competitive rates available, offering the tourist a totally different experience from the usual tour and travel packages in the market.

The HopAround website presents popular spots around the Philippines which tourists can review while mapping out their travel plans. Each destination will be linked with registered MTSPs from the chosen locality, each MTSP allocated with an online information box where the MTSPs contact details are posted and a chat window for inquiries provided. The tourist may access the listing of MTSPs and the contact details by clicking on the desired point of interest or location, thereby allowing direct interaction between the MTSP and the tourist or allowing the tourist to post an inquiry in the MTSP's chat window.

"The more service providers there are enlisted to cater to this growing number of tourists, the better the local tourism industry will be. And since tourism impacts the economy greatly, both people and country will benefit," he added.

RP hotels put on a fresh new face

From page B3-1

al corporate and leisure business," Batchelor says.

Sofitel Philippine Plaza

The Accor group took over the Hotel Philippine Plaza in January last year and since then, it has been repositioning the hotel by the bay into a Sofitel hotel with a "minimalist and classy" look.

But Filipino touches are also present, as the rooms have coconut inlays on the headboard, doors and wardrobe and capiz for the lighting fixtures.

"This is in keeping with the Sofitel philosophy of combining traditions with modern innovation, and giving the best of the locale with world class flair," explains Sofitel Philippine Plaza general manager Bernd Schneider.

Filipino craftsmanship is combined with the inherent French spirit that differentiates the Sofitel brand from the other hotels.

"It is the experience of the French art of living in terms of service, high level of comfort and excellent cuisine," Schneider says, "Sofitel seeks the best of everything and we are creating a better place where people simply want to be in—that is our promise."

So far, the renovation has covered five guest floors totaling 300 rooms, the swimming pool, banquet rooms and the Harbor Garden and Sunset Pavillion tents.

Schneider says it is a good time to rebrand because of the influx of tourists, particularly from new markets such as China, Taiwan, Russia, India and Europe.

"Definitely the upward trend has generated interest among a lot of investors and hotel projects are coming up," Schneider says, "international chains like Accor is taking notice of the Philippines and thus, is very keen on exploring opportunities to manage more hotels in the Philippines."

Mandarin Oriental, Manila

The Mandarin Oriental is investing close to P90 million in a series of renovation projects this year as it looks forward to a bright future for the hospitality industry in the Philippines.

"Mandarin Oriental Manila has always been recognized for excellent and high level of cuisine and service, and these renovation activities will support our mission to deliver Mandarin Oriental's legendary service standards and to maintain our position as one of the most preferred hotels," says Helmut Gaisberger, Mandarin Oriental Manila general manager.

The renovation program ended the first phase with the completion of the newly opened The Spa at the hotel's top floor.

The Thai-themed spa will have signature body treatments and massages. A hydro scrub and steam shower will be added by the end of the third quarter of the year.

The Spa boasts of being the only hotel spa that has its own yoga studio, where a resident yoga instructor from India conducts regular classes.

Also opening is the Martinis bar, to be followed by the construction of a new and bigger Health Club and the refurbishment of the popular Mandarin Deli.

Discovery Suites, Ortigas

Business is alive and kicking at the Ortigas business district in Pasig and the Discovery Suites, the leading serviced apartment in the area, has responded to the demand for better accommodations.

Discovery Suites has just renovated the Serendipity Lounge at the top floor, fixed up the swimming pool for a cleaner look, and refurbished the Restaurant 5 or the coffee shop last year.

This year, work is underway to improve the guest rooms by putting in new TV sets, duvets, runners and carpets. There will also major work to be done on the Atrium Lobby fronting ADB Avenue by the third quarter this year, followed by the function rooms and its Admiral Suite.

"The past two years have been marked with several milestones in the growth and development of the Discovery Group as we strive to capitalize on our unique collection of properties, grow our presence locally and realize our vision to be recognized as one fo the top local hotel brands," says Discovery Suites general manager Bobby Horrigan.

With major renovation program in place to keep the Discovery Suites' look fresh and up to date, Discovery Suites hopes to keep its reputation for comfort and quality service.

"These are exciting times for us, as we continue to grow our presence," Horrigan says.

Makati Shangri-la

The Makati Shangri-la, the flagship hotel of the Shangri-la hotel group in the Philippines, has a firm hold on the business traveler market due largely to its deliberate attempts to offer guests something new.

That something new may be in the form of new food, new restaurant concepts, new designs or all of them at one time.

Jeremy Aniere, resident manager of the Makati Shangri-la, says a hotel cannot stop and rest on its laurels because competition is always present and the guests demand only the best from the hotel.

The renovation of the Makati Shangri-la started a few years ago with the restaurants - Lobby Lounge, Inagi-ku, Circles. It extended to the rooms and now the work has moved on to the Conways bar and Red restaurant. The ballroom and the function rooms will also soon sport a new look.

Aniere says with more businessmen coming to the Philippines to scout for business opportunities, there is even more pressure on hotels such as the Makati Shangri-la to keep up with their ever-rising standard of quality and excellence.

He says, however, that with the continuing improvements on its facilities, the Makati Shangri-la is well positioned to get its fair share of the corporate travelers making their way to the Philippines.

A NEW look is in store for the Makati Shangri-La's Red.

Nescafe to build 15 demo farms

COFFEE BRAND NESCAFE PLANS TO BUILD 15 coffee demonstration farms across the Philippines this year to further promote sustainable agricultural practices at the grassroots level.

Joel Lumagbas, agricultural services department head of Nestle Philippines, Inc. (NPI), says Nescafe eyes the establishment of 10 coffee demo farms in Mindanao in the provinces of Agusan del Norte, Agusan del Sur, Bukidnon, Misamis Oriental, North Cotabato and Surigao del Sur. Meanwhile, three demo farms will be set up in Luzon and two more in Visayas.

"Nescafe values the importance of providing Filipino coffee farmers access to modern agricultural practices to help them improve the quality and quantity of their harvest," said Lumagbas.

The land used for these farms will occupy a combined total area of one to two hectares set aside by Nescafe partner cooperatives. It will offer its technology such as Robusta seeds and plantings, organic fertilizers, and specialized coffee agricultural training to the farmers for free.

Robusta is the coffee variety that the coffee brand uses to make its Nescafe Classic.

The Nestle Experimental and Development Farm (NEDF) in Tagum City in Davao del Norte is the country's only known supplier of good Robusta seeds and plantings at cost price.

But once the demo farms are operational, the farmers' cooperatives may opt to build coffee nurseries of their own and become the supplier of Robusta seeds and plantings as well as organic fertilizers in their area.

The farms will showcase Nescafe's Coffee-Based Sustainable Farming System (CBSFS) launched three years ago in line with the Sustainable Agriculture Initiative of Nestle (SAIN).

Nescafe's Sustainable Farming System encourages farmers to use coffee as a main crop and a variety of secondary crops to provide additional or alternative income for the farmers.

Since rows of coffee trees are ideally planted five meters apart, CBSFS promotes the planting of companion crops to maximize the space.

Although ampalaya, bell pepper, cabbage, eggplant, kamote, lettuce, peanuts, spring onion, string beans, ube, and upland kangkong, are ideal candidates, Lumagbas says it is better if the farmers determine the most in-demand produce in their local market.

Mid-sized fruit-bearing plants and trees like banana, cantaloupe, honeydew melon, lanzones, papaya and rambutan are also good since these plants will not compete for sunlight and water with the coffee trees.

While the farms in Mindanao have planted peanuts and even jatropha (a known source of biofuel) as secondary crops, Lumagbas expects the farms in Luzon to plant bell peppers, eggplants, string beans, and tomatoes because of the high demand for these in urban areas.

Planes to fly to gateway . . .

From page B3-4

50 percent increase from 16,630 arrivals in 2004.

Tourists on the rise

Tourist arrivals are meanwhile projected to reach 400,000 by 2010, of which 250,000 are expected to come from foreign countries.

Alvarez said around 30 percent of this total are projected to pass through the Busuanga airport.

Inspired by the anticipated gains from the project, Palawan Gov. Joel Reyes told his constituents: "Today, as we begin anew, we have to turn ourselves to adopt a culture of tourism in our daily lives... Think of tourism on a 24-hour basis, put a smile on our face and let's make ourselves indeed the next big thing."

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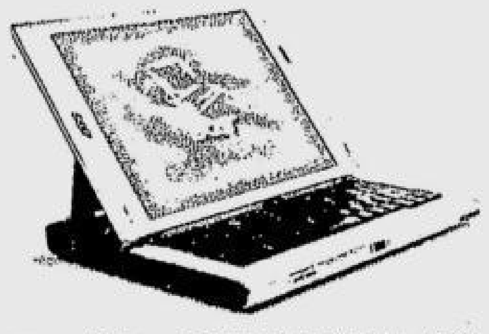

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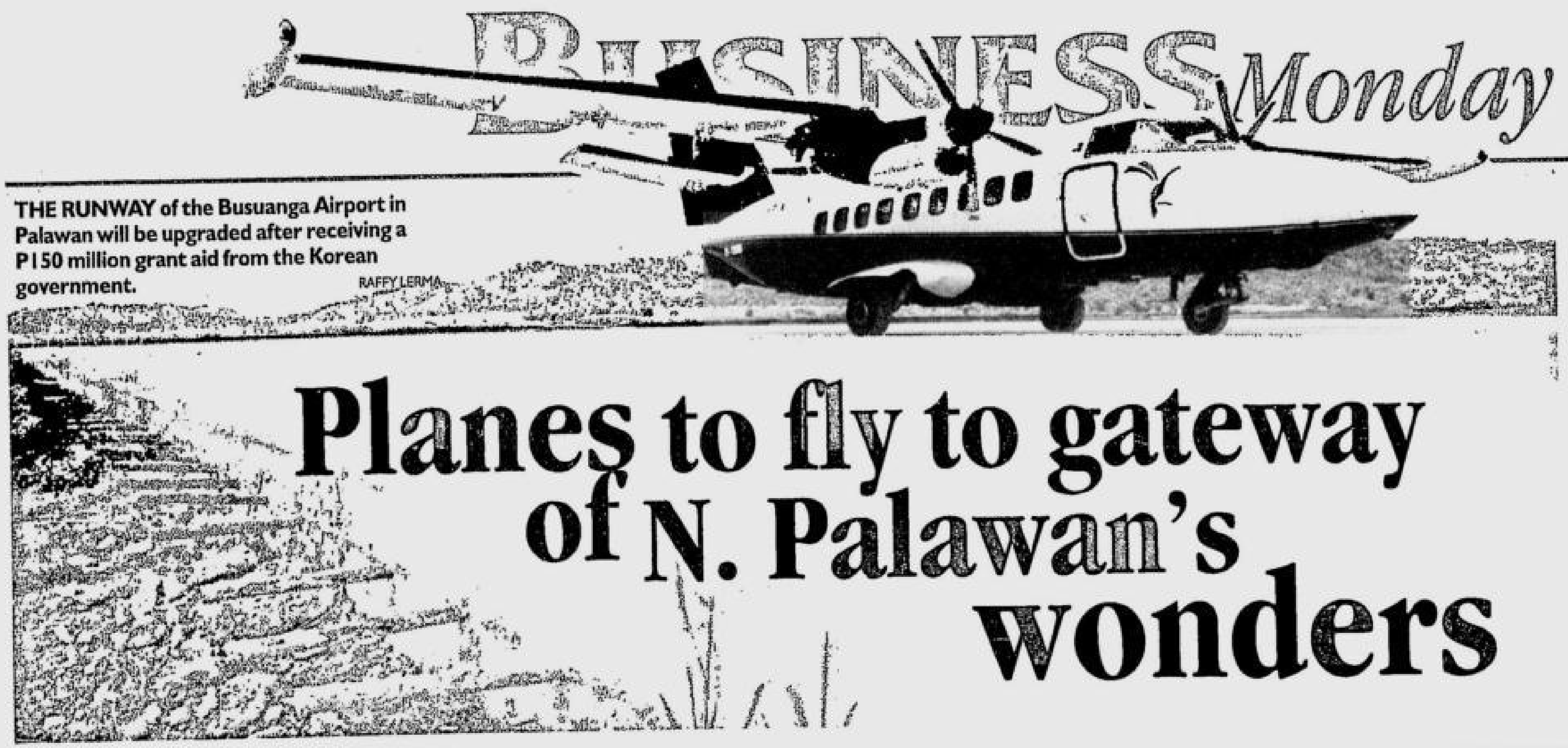

THE RUNWAY of the Busuanga Airport in Palawan will be upgraded after receiving a P150 million grant aid from the Korean government. RAFFY LERMA

Planes to fly to gateway of N. Palawan's wonders

By Tarra Quismundo

CORON TOWN, PALAWAN-Escaping to a walk by the beach or a dip in the clear waters of Northern Palawan may be as easy as a walk in the park.

Home to kilometers of white sand beaches and endless blue waters, Palawan's Busuanga Island is opening up to the more visitors with the set expansion of the Francisco Reyes Airport in Coron town, the gateway to Northern Palawan's wonders.

The Busuanga Airport Development Project broke ground here on Friday through a $3-million grant from the Korea International Cooperation Agency (Koica), the Korean government's development arm that has been undertaking infrastructure projects and aid programs in the Philippines since 1993.

Boost to economy

Local officials are counting on the project to boost the economy in Busuanga and the rest of the Calamian Group (including Culion and Coron Island), Northern Palawan's scenic islands that have been among the province's top tourist destinations.

"Tourist arrivals and shipment of marine products are expected to increase even more once this important project is completed... With its accessibility greatly enhanced, Calamian's economic development will definitely accelerate as larger aircraft carrying more passengers and cargo start flying into this airport," said Palawan Rep. Antonio Alvarez (1st district) during ceremonies here recently.

Admitting that "the municipality is incapable of funding such an undertaking," Coron Mayor Mario Reyes Jr. said the expansion project was the fruition of a dream.

"I dreamed that someday Coron will have an international airport... And now that our local airport will undergo upgrading to international standards... my dream has turned into reality," Reyes told an audience of around 100 locals and guests gathered under noontime heat in front of a makeshift stage just meters away from the airport's unfinished runway.

Set to be completed in December 2008, the airport expansion project had been jumpstarted in January with the extension of its existing runway from the current 900 meters to 1,200 meters. Runway paving is expected to be completed by May, said Roy Gamosa, project manager from the Department of Transportation and Communication (DOTC).

Koica's contribution will also be spent on the construction of a new airport terminal, a facility that could hold six times more than the current terminal. Gamosa said the prospective terminal can accommodate 300 passengers at a time, while the one in use now can only have 50 people at one time.

Alvarez said the national government has also earmarked a total of P1 billion for the project, of which P47 million has been allocated through the DOTC.

Bigger aircraft

Upon completion, the airport expansion would allow bigger and faster aircraft to land in Busuanga, officials said. Currently, only light propeller aircraft, among them 19-seater LET410 planes, could bring in visitors to the island.

"We're using a small aircraft today because of the deficiency of the airport. With this development, we will be able to use our bigger aircraft, the 32-seater Dornier 328, because the airport will be strong enough to carry the bigger aircraft. And then we would be able to operate more flights because of this improvement," said Avelino Zapanta, president of project partner South East Asian Airlines, a carrier that currently operates the most flights to Busuanga.

Zapanta added that the airport improvement would cut the Manila-Busuanga flight from an hour to 35 minutes.

The airport would however continue to serve as a day facility, operating only from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m.

It was Alvarez who convinced Koica to invest in the expansion project three years ago, when the agency had just donated $5 million for a vocational training center in Davao City.

"I met the planners to show them the place, how beautiful it is, and I chartered a helicopter and treated them for lunch. And they were convinced that what is needed in this part is an airport. That's how it started," said Alvarez.

Korean Ambassador Hong Jong-Ki said his government's investment to Palawan was "a dual purpose project."

"We have quite a good number of Korean tourists coming here so by expanding this airport, we're helping the Philippines and Korean tourists," the envoy told the INQUIRER, adding that Koreans frequent the country because of its beautiful people, beautiful land, beautiful beaches, and proximity to Korea."

Addressing Coron locals, the ambassador said: "I sincerely hope that with the project's expected completion, the enhanced airport facilities will serve its purpose not only in coping with the projected increase in air travel, but also enhance the operational safety of aircraft operation in the Philippines."

Passenger traffic at the Busuanga airport has been on an uptrend in the last three years, Alvarez said. Arrivals at the airport was estimated at 33,000 in 2005, around a

PLANES/ B3-3

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BUSINESS Monday

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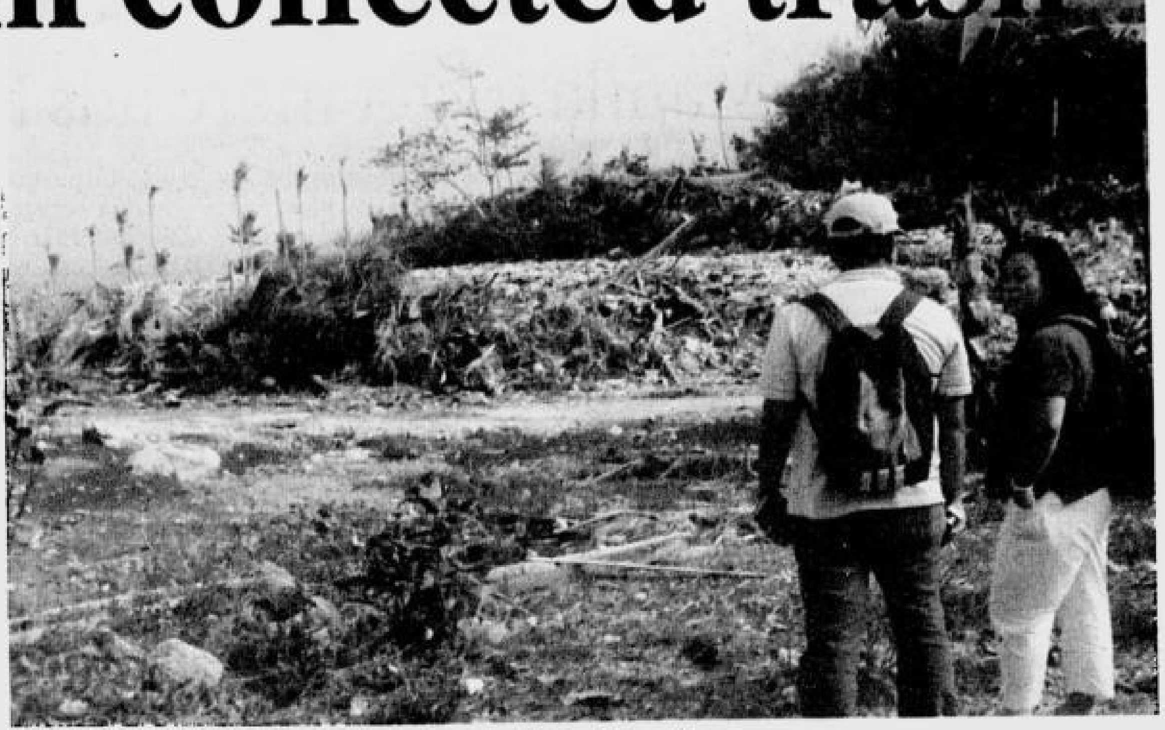
Locals take pride in collected trash

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

DISPOSABLE cups and plates are made into flower pots and floor tablets.


THE MATERIAL Recovery Facility in Barangay Manoc-Manoc here

BORACAY ISLAND, AKLAN—This time, it is not just about the fine white sand and the crystal clear water.

For 38-year-old Victor Mamin, who works here as a garbage collection supervisor, a bigger source of pride is the trash produced by the country's top tourist draw.

This is because he and about 70 other garbage workers here are turning disposable cups and plates into flower pots and floor tablets and kitchen wastes into fertilizers and selling old cans and bottles.

They are hopeful that the cash generated from their activities will soon be enough to sustain the operations of at least three garbage facilities here.

Head up

What's more, they now walk with their head up high because they know they are doing their share to help the island rise from its garbage crisis.

"I get excited every day I report to work because I feel I am helping in the improvement of Boracay," Mamin told the INQUIRER during a recent tour of a Material Recovery Facility (MRF) in Barangay Manoc-Manoc here.

The facility is one of the three MRFs on the island, established by the Department of Tourism in May 2006, in response to pleas for help by residents and resort owners alarmed by the discovery two years ago of an open dump on the island.

Trucks of trash

The three MRFs now accept an average of 11 truck loads a day of waste, which is segregated into biodegradables and recyclables.

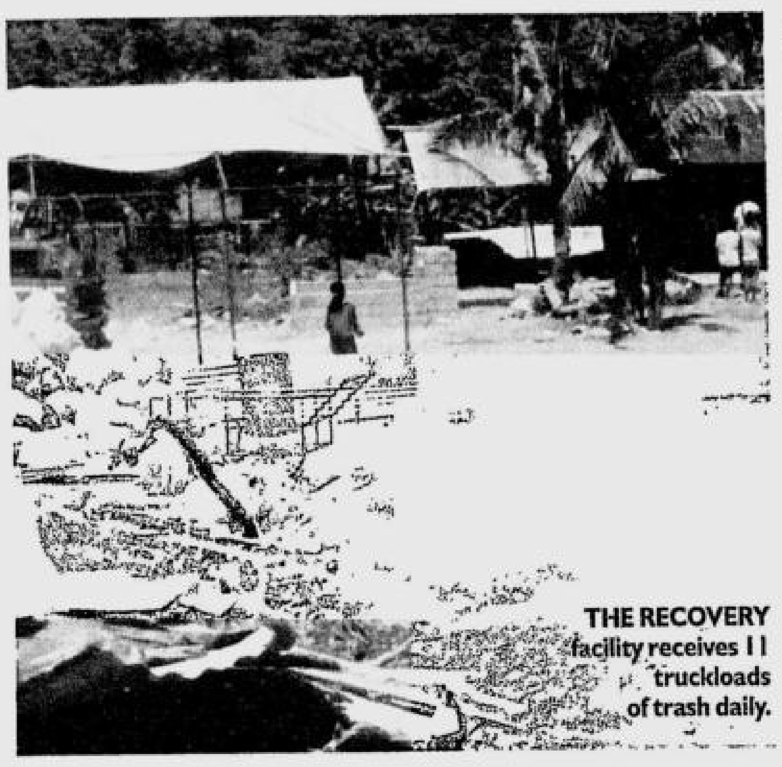
Project manager Judea Millora said the facility in Barangay Balabag managed to get an air-conditioner and a computer from San Miguel Company in exchange for collected bottles.

Resorts maintaining gardens also buy compost made from the kitchen waste collected at the MRFs.

Used cooking oil mixed with disposable cups and plates are melted and turned into flower pots and floor tablets, which are sold for P15 each.

Wastes from clinics

The MRF in Barangay Yapak also manages wastes from clinics and hospitals. Needles, for instance, are sealed in hard jars and are buried in tombs, said Presidential Assistant Secretary for Boracay Consuelo Padilla.


THE RECOVERY facility receives 11 truckloads of trash daily.

The facilities were set up to comply with Republic Act 9003 or the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act, which not only bans open dumps but also provides for waste management starting at the barangay level.

There were garbage facilities here before. Mamin should know because he has been working as a street sweeper since 1996.

But there was no segregation, and what were referred to as garbage facilities just served as stinking dumping grounds, aggravating the problem brought about by the increasing number of tourists and rapid mushrooming of shops, bars and hotels.

New construction also meant more workers being shipped to the island, and more people means more waste, explained Barangay Balabag chair Glenn Sacapaño, who oversees the operations of the one-hectare MRF in his area.

"The DOT had to intervene," Millora said.

The project was provided with an original budget of close to P10 million and the money was used to buy trucks, shredders and bioreactors (to turn biodegradable wastes into compost).

Millora, a doctor, stayed on the island for several months, and taught not only garbage workers but residents and resort owners as well on how to segregate garbage.

Soon, high school undergraduate workers were operating computers for their monitoring reports, wearing gloves and face masks when handling garbage, wearing color-coded uniforms

LOCALS/ B4-2

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RP back on foreign networks' radar screen

Execs fly to Manila to get more ads for shows

By Daxim L. Lucas

TURNER Entertainment Networks Asia Inc. SVP president Ian Diamond says there's great opportunity in the Philippine cable TV advertising market.

THE BUOYANT MOOD OVER THE COUNtry's improving economic prospects is not only found in the financial markets and the property sector.

If recent events are any indication, this optimism is also set to benefit the advertising industry which is trying to capitalize on the increased consumer spending that greater affluence brings.

This is especially true for foreign cable channels which are now taking a closer look at the Philippines as a potential growth market both in terms of the number of viewers and the number of local and international advertisers.

Long dismissed as a cable TV and programming backwater, the Philippines is now back on the radar screen of network executives abroad.

"It's a great opportunity," says Turner Entertainment Networks Asia Inc. senior vice president Ian Diamond, describing the Philippine cable TV advertising market. "There's lots of disposable income."

Summer push

His responsibilities include oversight of several international cable TV channels including Cartoon Network, which is the leading cartoon television channel in the country.

According to Diamond, the country's potential as a revenue maker is so good that Cartoon Network recently launched its summer programming package for the local market dubbed "Halo-Halo."

The official says Cartoon Network wants to capitalize on the summer school break where children are expected to spend more time watching television. And more eyes on the television means a bigger audience for advertisers.

"There are simply more eyes [on the television]," he says. "While we have excellent programming all year round, we are able to optimize the number of hours during the day [during summer]."

Because of this, Cartoon Network is also capitalizing on the opportunity to reel in more advertisers, especially those aiming to sell their products to children.

He says Cartoon Network experienced an 18-percent increase in revenues from its top 10 advertising clients, he says.

Some of the new clients Cartoon Network has added to its portfolio in 2006 include 20th Century Fox, Hershey's, Lamoiyan Corp., PLDT, Toy Kingdom, Goldilocks and Pizza Hut.

Since 2006, Cartoon Network has also been working with "nontraditional" advertisers including Happee Toothpaste, Energizer, Globe Telecom and Coach E Basketball School. Other nontraditional advertisers on the channel also include Metrobank, Shangri-La Hotels and Duty Free Philippines.

Despite the focusing on children as its traditional strength, Diamond says that Cartoon Network's appeal is universal, with adults making up a significant portion of the channel's viewers.

"Everyone loves cartoons," he says. "In our case, 47 percent of all our viewers are not kids."

Diamond says Cartoon Network is committed to the Philippine market, having recently set up a local website and a dedicated local program feed.

Almost simultaneously, a ranking official of ESPN Star Sports also flew in Manila to touch base with advertisers who may be interested in reaching the country's large base of sports buffs.

For sports buffs

"The main reason for my visit is [that] we've seen the Philippines [over] the last 12 to 18 months, some good growth in the advertising market," ESPN Star Sports senior vice president Charles Less says in an interview. "What I'm here to do is to help further that growth, meet with various advertisers, to tell them what we have for their clients and for themselves to help promote their products and sell their services."

According to Less, he is impressed by the growth exhibited by the local advertising market, despite recent trends showing a marked shift toward outdoor advertising.

"We are here to see how much desire there is [among advertisers] and to see if this is even a potential place for growth for our business or for our company," he says.

According to the ESPN official, local viewers are demanding more and more sports programming that was not previously considered in the Philippine market, like golf or Formula One racing.

This, he says, is a sure sign that the profile of local ESPN viewers is changing and moving up the social and economic stratum.

Describing the demand among local viewers, Less says the clamor for the "three Bs": basketball, billiards and boxing, is slowly being matched by demand for programming about golf, football and tennis.

"We have seen it happen before in other countries," he says, explaining the gradual migration in local viewers' preferences. "I've seen it in Southeast Asia, in Singapore and Malaysia definitely."

"Look at Singapore over the last three to four years," he adds. "It's booming there right now and along with our advertisers."

The ESPN official credits the strong Philippine economy for the phenomenon.

"I suppose the income must be getting higher," he says. "It sounds like that the economy is doing better when these sort of things happen, because when the economy starts to go down, these are the first things to get pulled off the table."

Already, ESPN is offering programming that is tailor-made for the Philippine market, hoping that advertisers will seize the potential to reach viewers who have above-average spending power.

"When people have less money to spend, people do not [play] golf as much, but as the economy gets better, these advertisers tend to come onboard," Less adds.

Helping viewers follow the money

By Tina G. Santos

JEREMY Pink, president and managing director of CNBC Asia Pacific

SINGAPORE—FINANCIAL NEWS network CNBC is making it easy for its viewers to follow the money trail.

Viewers - businessmen in particular - will be able "to follow the money and the market as they are happening around the world" as CNBC revolutionizes the way global business and financial news is delivered.

"We recognize that business audiences have different information needs, and this varies depending on the time of the business and trading day," said Jeremy Pink, president and managing director of CNBC Asia Pacific, of the network's decision to reformat.

Pink said CNBC's new programming line-up would provide "a more complete picture of global business for our viewers, responding to their demands and delivering more relevant programs."

"I believe our new format puts us in the prime position to follow, live, the money as the markets open in Australia, Asia, Europe and the US," he added.

As part of its program innovation, CNBC introduces three new shows—"Squawk Australia," "CNBC's Cash Flow" and "Capital Connection."

CBNC will start the day with "Squawk Australia," a prequel to the Australian market, offering forecasts and financial analysis before the opening of the Australian Stock Exchange.

"Australia is probably the best place to start our programming because being the first major market to open in the region, it sets the agenda and predicts the market movements for the rest of Asia," explained John Casey, CNBC's director of news and programming.

He added that the show would be broadcast live from the network's newly-established facility in Sydney's financial district.

"Squawk Australia" will be anchored by Jeffrey James, a seasoned international journalist who has worked for 20 years in Australia, Asia and Europe.

As the markets are set to open in Asia, "Squawk Asia" will be followed by "Squawk Box," the signature program of CNBC that tracks investment strategies, interviews prominent business figures and debates and debunks the latest market rumors.

Co-anchored by Martin Soong and Amanda Drury, "Squawk Box" will be improved with a livelier, more dynamic format, Casey told Asian journalists who recently visited the CNBC Asia headquarters here.

"Viewers are also invited to discuss, debate and deliberate the big news stories with experts who are on air," he said.

And as the market and trading action heats up across the region, so does the coverage of the market's action on "CNBC's Cash Flow."

Trader and investor-focused, the program highlights investment, trading and business opportunities out of the mass of information and announcements that come up throughout the day.

"It aims to turn news flow into cash flow, " Casey stressed. "The program delivers actionable data for viewers to act on."

He said the program was interactive as floor traders and analysts are given the opportunity to interact with guests and on-air journalists, offering news, views and opinions on the latest market action.

"'CNBC's Cash Flow" will break traditional TV barriers, and will translate to mobile and broadband platforms accessible anytime, anywhere," Casey said.

It will be followed by "Capital Connection," which will be broadcast simultaneously from Asia and Europe.

Delivering major cross-border stories that impact Asia and Europe, the show offers viewers a summary of mid-day market action in Asia and sets the agenda for Europe.

"The program also offers fast and interactive reporting from the top business journalists from all the major financial capitals in the two continents as they deliver capital specific relevance for all the major business stories of the day," Casey added.

"Capital Connection" will be co-anchored by Maura Fogarty based in Singapore and Steve Sedgewick in London.

"Our new programing strategy aims to provide more powerful and in-depth business and financial news coverage, offering audiences exactly what they need during the business weekday," Casey said.

With the new programming schedule, he said CNBC would be a valuable business resource, providing, in real time, up-to-date and comprehensive business and financial news and information that financial professionals, senior management and high net worth investors can rely on.

"Everyone wants to know how the dollar is moving, how it will affect their investments, how it will impact their businesses. So, by us providing them live real time information that's relevant, they can make the best financial decision for themselves and for their businesses," Casey said.

He added: "If you're watching CNBC in the Philippines, it's really important because what happens in the rest of Asia, and generally in the world, is going to affect the Filipino viewers."

Apart from the new shows, CNBC will also open an improved studio in its Asia Pacific headquarters in Singapore.

"Viewers will also see other improvements on screen with an enhanced bug bar, which features prioritized data so the most important information is easily accessible," CNBC officials said.

CNBC is available in over 21 countries across Asia-Pacific, including the Philippines, and distributed to over 140 million households. It is viewed in the Philippines via cable TV.

New sport on the block: Sea kayaking

PEOPLE DON'T USUALLY THINK OF PLAStic as the most durable material. But Inca Plastics Philippines Inc., makes plastic products that are stronger than fiberglass and metal, and can be custom-made into almost anything imaginable.

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Since Inca was established in the Philippines in 1989—equipped with a 14-foot oven and three-armed carousel turret-type rotomolder—it has made over 250 products: storage tanks, containers, waste bins, decorative planters, septic tanks, road safety products, food handling trays, recreational boats, vending carts and the famed sit-on-top kayak.

Although a relatively new sport in the Philippines, sea kayaking looks to be the next big thing, given the variety of seascapes within the 7,107 islands, the pristine waters, and marine life. Kayaks also provide a leisurely and peaceful way to take in all the sights, while not disturbing the surrounding area. This activity is a perfect way to pass the summer, and a great attraction for resort and hotel guests.

Being the local pioneer of these one-piece kayaks, rest assured that Inca has perfected its design. Each one contains two molded in-seats and foot wells, and allows for good stability, top performance, and easy paddling. It is made of virgin polyethylene resin, compounded with ultra-violet stabilizers, ensuring a durable, no-chip, no-fade product.

One kayak is 168 inches in length, 30 inches in width, 11 inches in height, 70 pounds, and comes in yellow, orange, blue, or green. Customers will also get two life vests and two single paddle oars. A single kayak costs P28,000. Establishments who rent out the kayak at least eight hours a week will earn their money back anywhere from 35 weeks, at P100 an hour, to 18 weeks, at P250 an hour.

So not only do Inca Kayaks provide the perfect summertime activity, whether solo or with a friend, and allow people to explore all the beauty the Philippines has to offer, it is also a cost effective way to attract people to your establishment and is guaranteed to give customers a time of fascination and fun.

Locals take pride ...

From page B4-1

with collars and using two-way radios to communicate.

In November 2006, they were given immunization shots to protect them from illnesses.

"We want them to improve. We are motivating them to feel their work is dignified. Now, people respect them," Millora said.

So when garbage collectors require segregated wastes from resorts and households, employees and residents know they have to comply.

When Mamin issues citation tickets to violators, resort owners pay the P2,500-fine and promise to tell their employees never again to bring out unsegregated trash.

Millora said compliance now ranges from 50 to 93 percent.

Millora was also happy not only because they had spent only P4.8 million of the original budget, but also because the facilities they had put up were on their way to becoming self-sufficient.

Sacapaño said the MRF in Balabag earn P24,000 a month from the waste it was selling. The MRFs also help provide jobs to residents here.

Analita Garcia, 44, earns P160 a day from her work as a garbage sorter in Manoc-Manoc.

Her earnings help send her two children to grade school, since her husband Rufo does not have a stable job.

Her operation was disrupted late last year, however, when the MRFs were damaged due to Typhoon Seniang.

Fortunately, Tourism Secretary Ace Durano last month turned over an initial P837,319 to the Boracay Chamber of Commerce Inc.

The amount was used to repair the MRFs as well as finance the conduct of a food preparation training course. The DOT will give another P179,100 to sustain the training until July.

"We will fund the construction of new structures to make them stronger against typhoons," Padilla said.

Padilla also said the group hoped that the garbage management system in Boracay would not only solve the crisis permanently, but would also serve as models for other areas in the country.

The MRFs are already in place, changing the way people look at garbage and at themselves. But the work to ensure a clean and green Boracay is far from over.

A job that requires applicants to have compassion

EVER CONSCIOUS OF THE WAY THEY serve their clients, one of the country's leading HMOs, IntelliCare, has made a spin on its liaison officers by calling them Patient Relations Officers instead.

They hope the renaming isn't just superficial. IntelliCare's PROs do more than what the average Liaison Officer does such as arrange for ambulances, hospital admission and confinement, and assistance during patient's discharge.

As IntelliCare is fond of pointing out, their PROs are often commended by their clients. For them, there is no better reassurance of their clients' trust than that.

As the company's front liners, the PROs are the ones who give the company a face. They are the ones who face the clients when they take care of them from admission into the hospital until discharge, coordinating with the admitting and billing sections of the hospital and the accredited doctors handling the patient's case.

For the HMO, it mainly means treating clients not as implemented business deals but rather as patients whose lives are in their hands.

Josephine Sabuga, Senior Manager of IntelliCare's Customer Service Department explains, "We give them the training they need to meet the demands of the job. We put them in regular seminars like customer service and training on new medical developments, terms and modalities."

So where does the difference lie then? Simple: It's the initiative.

Sabuga, herself once an IntelliCare PRO, says they tell their PROs to put themselves in the shoes of their patients. "We make sure they take care of the patients the way the patients expect to be taken cared of," Sabuga affirms.

Memorable stories involving PROs abound. Sabuga relates one where a member patient died in the hospital just last Christmas. IntelliCare's Patient Relations Officer unselfishly spent his Christmas Eve with the bereaved family not just to help out but to personally console and condole with the family.

Another instance was when a PRO voluntarily drove home an elderly patient with a heart ailment when no available relative was there to fetch him. His duty could have just ended in attending to his discharge and settling the bills but instead, he gave his time to safely bring home the patient.

SABUGA

IntelliCare PROs work closely with the in-house Customer Service Department in medical emergency cases because they are the ones who verify the patient's confinement in a hospital. Involving the PRO in emergency cases is an SOP in IntelliCare, and even more important if the patient is unconscious or a companion is tense and unable to act on the urgency accordingly.

"Some of our PROs have been known to brave the floods just so they could attend to the patient. They even make a follow-up of the patient's case even after the basic service has been given, just to make sure that everything has been done properly," Sabuga relates.

That's why in this line of work, one needs to have an amount of compassion that will eventually translate to a kind of service that is not centered on profits. "When we interview for a potential PRO to come in and join the group, we already try to find out if they have enough compassion in them to begin with," Sabuga says.

There are easy ways after all to do this. Simple answers to a few simple questions will reveal so much about a personality. And as they go along, the client's feedback becomes just as important.

"We get lots of mail from patients. We read them during meetings because that is one very good way to encourage our people. It's a very good pick-upper after a very long day."

And with that, IntelliCare patients can expect care that isn't just first-rate clinically, but also offered with familial warmth not all HMO clients can take comfort in.

Cosmetic surgery for those who truly need it

From page B4-4

enhancement for eyelids, eyebag and eyelid folds as well as facial rejuvenation.

Medical tourisn

Complicated surgical procedures, such as breast augmentation, breast implant and liposuction are also undertaken at the operating rooms of the main building of the hospital, Morales says.

To be sure, the aesthetic center is the hospital's response to the surge in medical tourism.

Morales says that the hospital's goals are in line with the government's—to promote the country as the "new hub of wellness and medical care in Asia."

Located in the heart of Manila, the ASC is ideal not only for local patients, but also for medical tourists who prefer having procedures done in a hospital setting, he says.

"Foreign patients will benefit from the proximity of the ASC to numerous hotels and Manila's most popular attractions," said Morales. "But more importantly, more and more patients have been choosing the Philippines as a medical tourism destination because of the quality healthcare services here and the presence of skilled doctors and nurses."

He says they want to specifically target the workers returning home from abroad.

On the rise

The demand for aesthetic plastic surgery in the country has been on the rise. In turn, there has been a marked increase in the number of clinics offering surgical procedures. Not all have been certified safe.

A lack of sufficient training on the doctor's part or inadequate surgical facilities can lead to unfavorable results such as complications, injuries and even deaths.

This, Morales says, is the ASC's edge over its contemporaries.

"Since this is a hospital-based center, our patients are assured of their safety," he says.

Apart from the presence of 11 highly competitive surgeons, the facility also has "diagnostic and support equipment to address any eventuality that may arise during an operation," he adds.

At the end of the day, it will be the quality of service and patient care that will carry the facility through.

'New lady exec . . .

From page B4-4

Business while juggling corporate world and motherhood. She has three children—four months to 14 years.

With her husband, an economics and social science doctor of education at the New Era University, she even finds time to remain an active member in her church community.

All in a day's work for Lapira, who describes her managerial style as "hard-hitting, consultative and results oriented."

"I can come across as aggressive to some people but it doesn't take long for them to realize that I am sincerely passionate about the products I handle," she says. "In my experience, that kind of passion is extremely infectious within a company and helps to boost morale and drive productivity upwards."

LAPIRA

"As much as possible, I also strive to reach a consensus," elaborates Lapira, who makes it a point to encourage everyone in the company to voice their opinion in order to get a broader perspective.

"This consultative process may seem tedious to other managers but I've found that you can get remarkable insights from people if you're open to what they have to say."

Lapira credits her six-year tenure with Puyat Steel Corp. for shaping her managerial style. "The Puyats gave me a chance to learn as much as I could about the industry and I owe a lot to them," she says, recounting fond memories of her on-the-job-training when her bosses would give her volumes of technical manuals on metallurgy to study so she could have unassailable product knowledge in the steel industry.

"Ever since then, I've always applied the same thoroughness to understanding my product because it's only when you are immersed in your product that you understand it's potential and can sell it with conviction."

Changing landscape

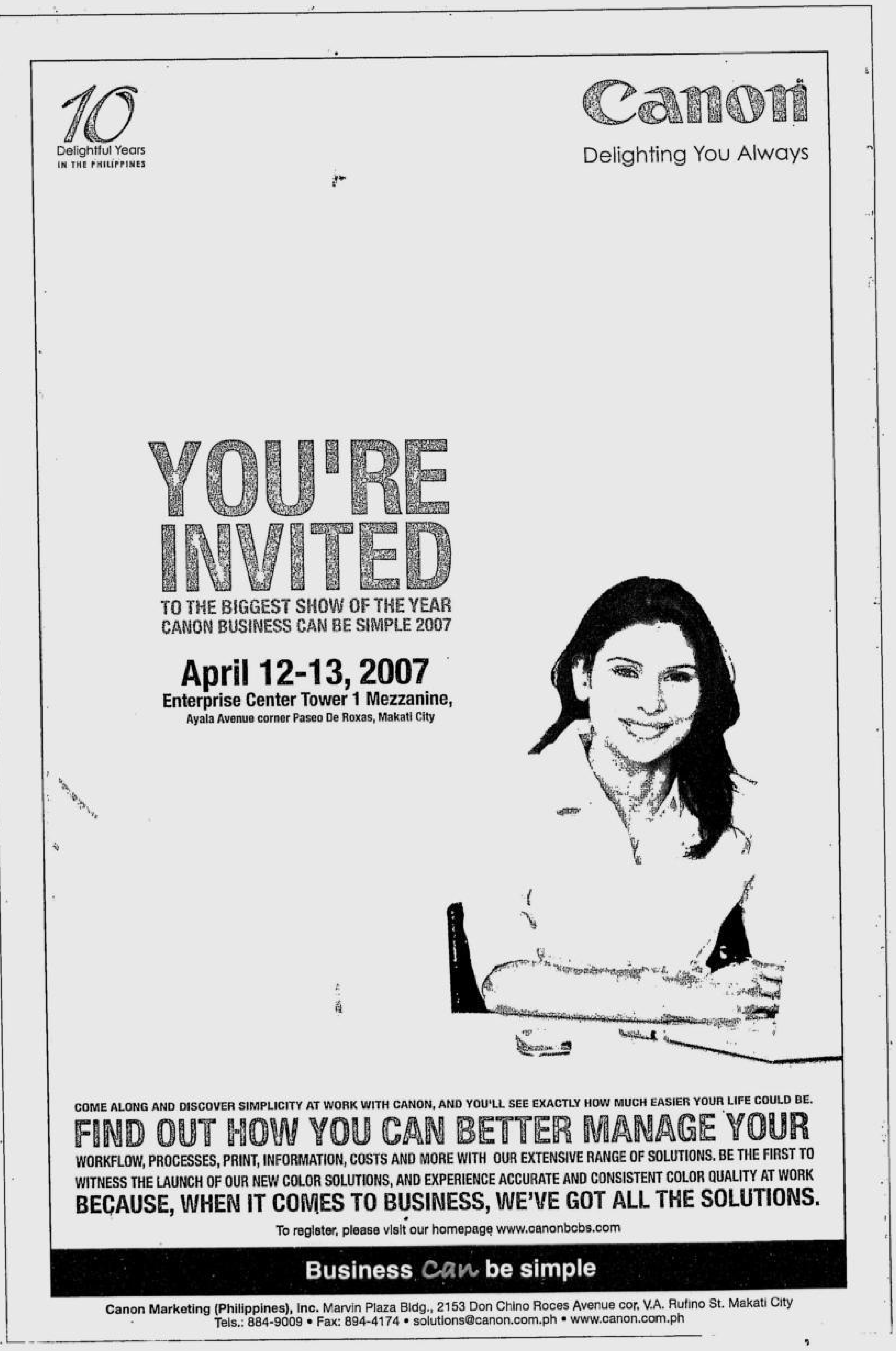
Now, as president of Hunter Douglas Philippines, Lapira applies her keen analytical intellect and no nonsense work ethic to changing the landscape of Philippine architecture.

"Right now, most people could walk through some of the most admired modern structures in the country and not recognize Hunter Douglas' contribution to its design," she admits. "We intend to change that situation and take the Hunter Douglas name beyond its current niche status among architects and designers to the mainstream public."

With 85 years of expertise in integrated manufacturing, Hunter Douglas has 85 years of expertise in integrated manufacturing. The products grace some of the known buildings in the country like Insular Life building in Alabang, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources in Davao, the Ateneo Graduate School, the Philippine International Convention Center and the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas.

"The Philippines is currently in a construction boom driven by positive economic growth spurred by the increased remittances from OFWs, renewed confidence from Filipino immigrants living abroad who are contributing back to the economy by buying Philippine properties as well the growth of the business process outsourcing industry (BPOs), among the few," she explains "My job is to raise market awareness for Hunter Douglas products so that builders know that we can provide integrated architectural solutions to meet and even surpass their requirements."

"In my experience, this is still a male dominated industry but at the end of the day, what matters most to businessmen are results and like Hunter Douglas, I am all about delivering optimum results."



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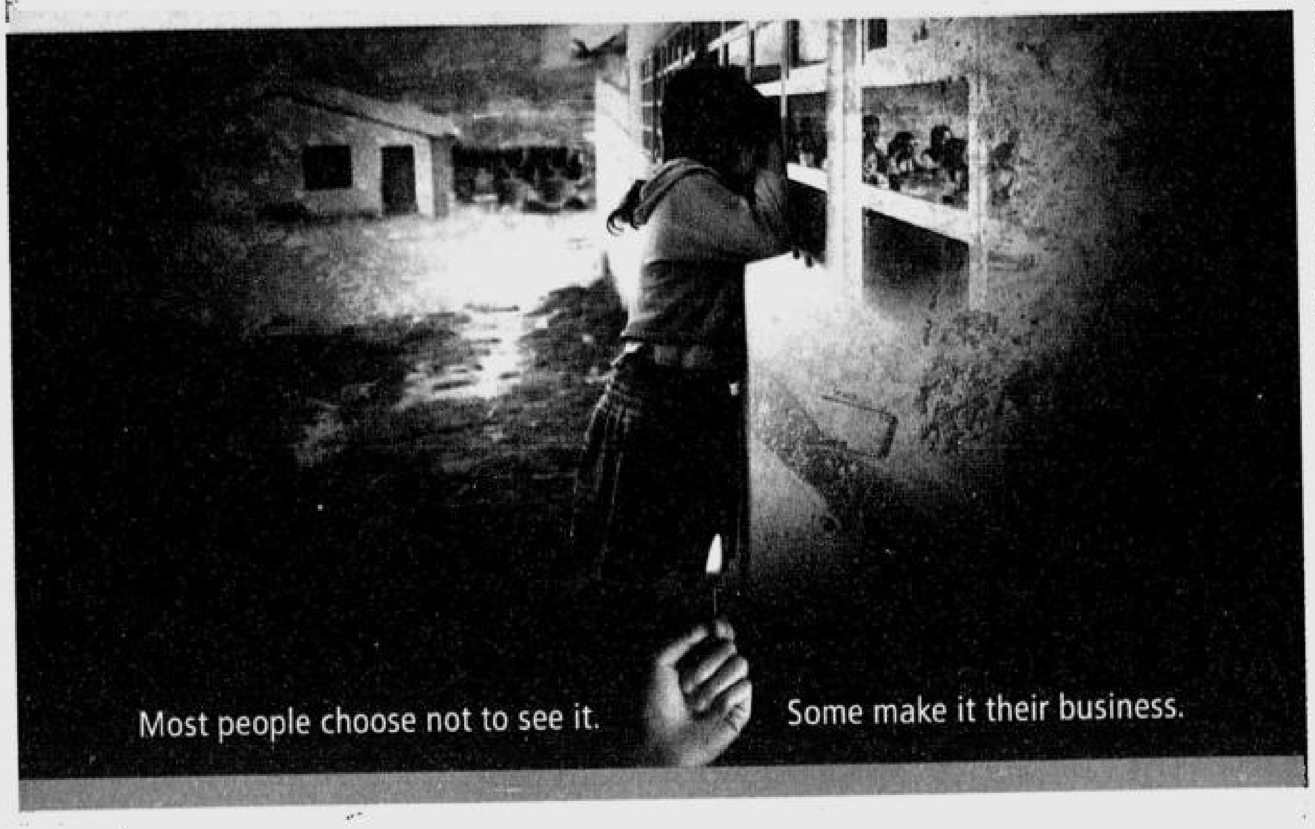
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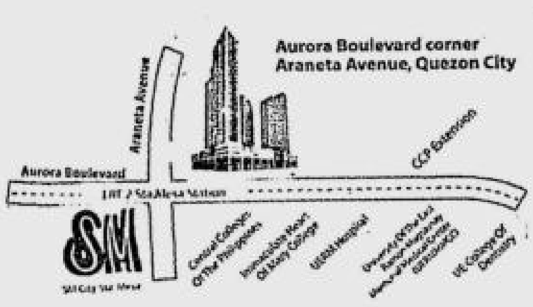

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Endermologie

DR. FLORENCIO Lucero at the Aesthetic Surgery Center RUDY ESPERAS

Cosmetic surgery for those who truly need it

By Tina G. Santos

FOR THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN scarred and maimed, turning to a plastic surgeon for help is an option only a few can afford.

The Manila Doctors Hospital hopes to correct all that when it recently opened its Aesthetic Surgery Center.

The center aims to provide reconstructive surgery for the ordinary wage-earners in need, offering them a helping hand without demanding an arm and a leg in return.

The hospital's plastic surgery group believes that soon, cosmetic and reconstructive surgery will become commonplace reasonably priced procedures, catering not only to the well-heeled, but to the toiling masses as well.

A nose job in the United States can cost anywhere from $2,500 to $4,000. At some high-end cosmetic surgery clinics here, the rates range from P60,000 to P100,000.

But without giving a figure, an official of the hospital's Aesthetic Surgery Center says their rates "are more affordable."

Within reason

The aesthetic center may be considered "high-end," but it offers competitive and standardized pricing scheme for every procedure, while the fees of surgeons are well within reason.

Dr. Dante Morales, Manila Doctors' medical director, says that the hospital's aesthetic center offers more than just a nose job or eyelid enhancement.

The hospital's surgery team offers hope to people who suffer from physical deformity, brought on either by accident or disease, and who may have nowhere else to turn to for help, Morales says.

Those people, he adds, do not have the kind of money to make themselves whole.

"Most sufferers would most likely stay in that condition for the rest of their lives," Morales adds.

Steering away from vanity

Morales hopes to steer people away from the vanity aspect of cosmetic surgery.

"People commonly associate plastic surgery with facelifts or other beauty routines, we want to change that perception with the establishment of ASC," Morales says.

He adds that the people behind the new medical facility on United Nations Ave. in Manila envision the center to be a one-stop shop for patients who want to undergo any enhancement—whether cosmetic or reconstructive—procedures.

Morales wants to emphasize the reconstructive services—either surgical or therapeutic—that the facility is offering for those suffering from burns and scars, traumas and congenital defects.

Also, ASC offers the usual range of services designed to enhance a patient's aesthetic appeal.

Apart from a noselift or nose trim, other cosmetic procedures open to patients include

COSMETIC/ B4-3

'New lady exec is hard-hitting, consultative and results oriented'

GIGI ANNE M. LAPIRA BRINGS more than a dozen years of practical marketing experience to Hunter Douglas. She used to be with Puyat Steel Corp. and James Hardie Philippines where she developed shrewdly analytical marketing mind, adept at long range planning while remaining open to innovation.

Lapira is the first lady president of the local operations of Hunter Douglas, a leader in architectural products and window fashion.

Before taking the helm of Hunter Douglas Philippines, Lapira was based in the United States where, as managing director for Globe Asia Executive Consulting, she handled the business development and strategic market planning and execution for various local and overseas companies.

Management with style

Lapira completed her MBA at the Ateneo Graduate School of

NEW LADY/ B4-3

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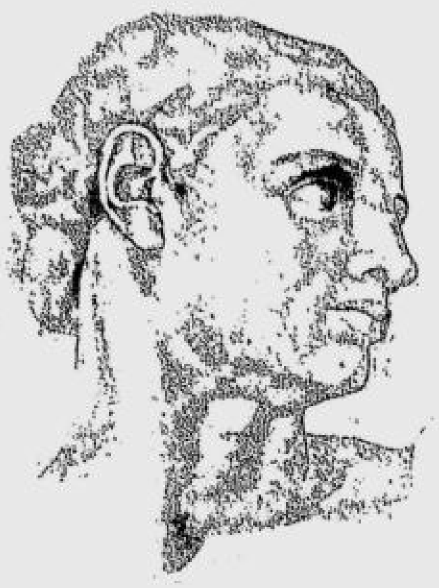
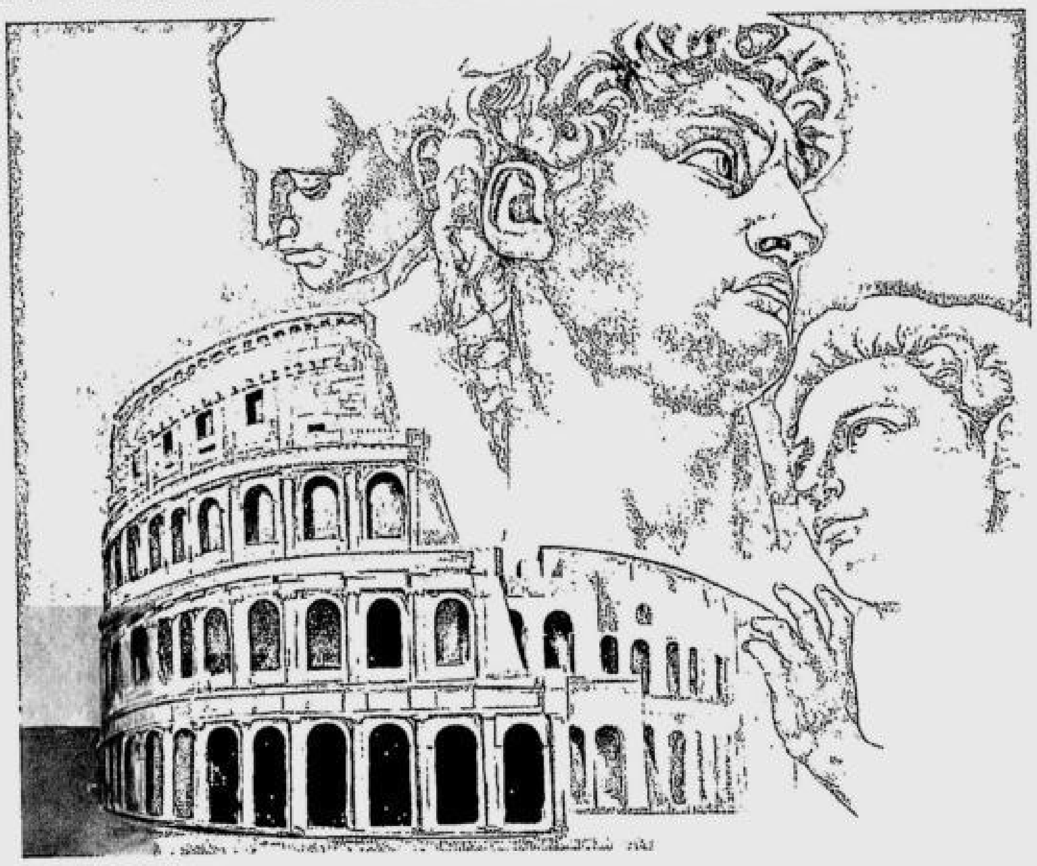


"ADAM"

THE ARTIST



"COLOSSEO"

The agony and ecstasy of Tomas Concepcion

The Rome-based Filipino artist and former Congress representative of overseas workers is a protest artist through and through

By **Dexter R. Matilla**
Contributor

ON A FRENZIED JANUARY afternoon in 1969, Jan Palach was walking around Wenceslas Square in Prague with a single-minded task. Upon reaching the ramp of the National Museum, at around 4 p.m., he poured gasoline all over his body and set himself on fire.

Somewhere, Tomas Concepcion learned of the brave 20-year-old philosophy student's dreadful call for action to his fellow Czechs whose country had been invaded a year earlier by the Soviets.

It made such an impact on Concepcion that he held a protest exhibit at Galleria Baesa Nuoi in Rome dedicated to Palach.

"That was my first encounter with art and protest… and social and political problems," said Concepcion. "And it never left me. I don't know why, but this is like an obsession. I'm against the violence of man against man. God did not make the world that way."

Roughly three years later, Concepcion became part of the Movement for Free Philippines, in which he was chair for Southern Europe.

"It was a very visible movement in Europe," Concepcion said. "Nobody organized marches and protests like I did."

At the same time, Concepcion started the Filipino Democratic Workers' Union as the number of Filipinos working in Italy had risen. He financed the movement as well as his political activities by doing art shows in the US, one of which was graced by Jackie Onassis.

As a 17-year-old, Concepcion, whose mother was of Muslim royalty, went to the US where he studied at San Francisco State College, majoring in Painting and Theater Design.

He moved to New England and worked as a set designer for Warwick Theaters. From there, he set off for Canada, studying at the Ecole des Beaux Arts.

He traveled to Europe to visit museums, spending some time in Paris where he tried to look for a studio but was unsuccessful. He would eventually find his place in Rome.

His first studio was at Palacio Savelli, where the Inquisition used to hold office, and a walking distance from Piazza Navona of the Four Rivers fountains by Gianlorenzo Bernini.

It was at the Eternal City where, as a portrait painter, he got commissions to paint Prince Steno Borghese, Duchess Nicoletta de Serracapriola, soprano Leontyne Price, conductor Thomas Shippers, banker Baron Leon Lambert, and film actors Silvano Mangano and Marcello Mastroianni.

He has completed paintings and sculptures famous the world over. Concepcion enjoys the distinction of being the only Filipino to have done the sculptures of two Popes: Paul VI, which is found at the Vatican University; and John Paul II, commissioned by the Vatican as a gift to Guam.

Concepcion is also proud of the Ninoy Aquino statue he made for the People's Park at Edsa.

"I had it sent to Manila in time for the first anniversary of Ninoy," Concepcion said. "I love Ninoy—but who doesn't?"

Mean representative

Concepcion's firm resolve to uphold human rights led him to politics, in which he was a very resolute and straight-talking member of the House of Representatives in the 9th Congress. He was a representative of overseas Filipino workers.

"I was a mean representative," recalled

THE AGONY/ C2

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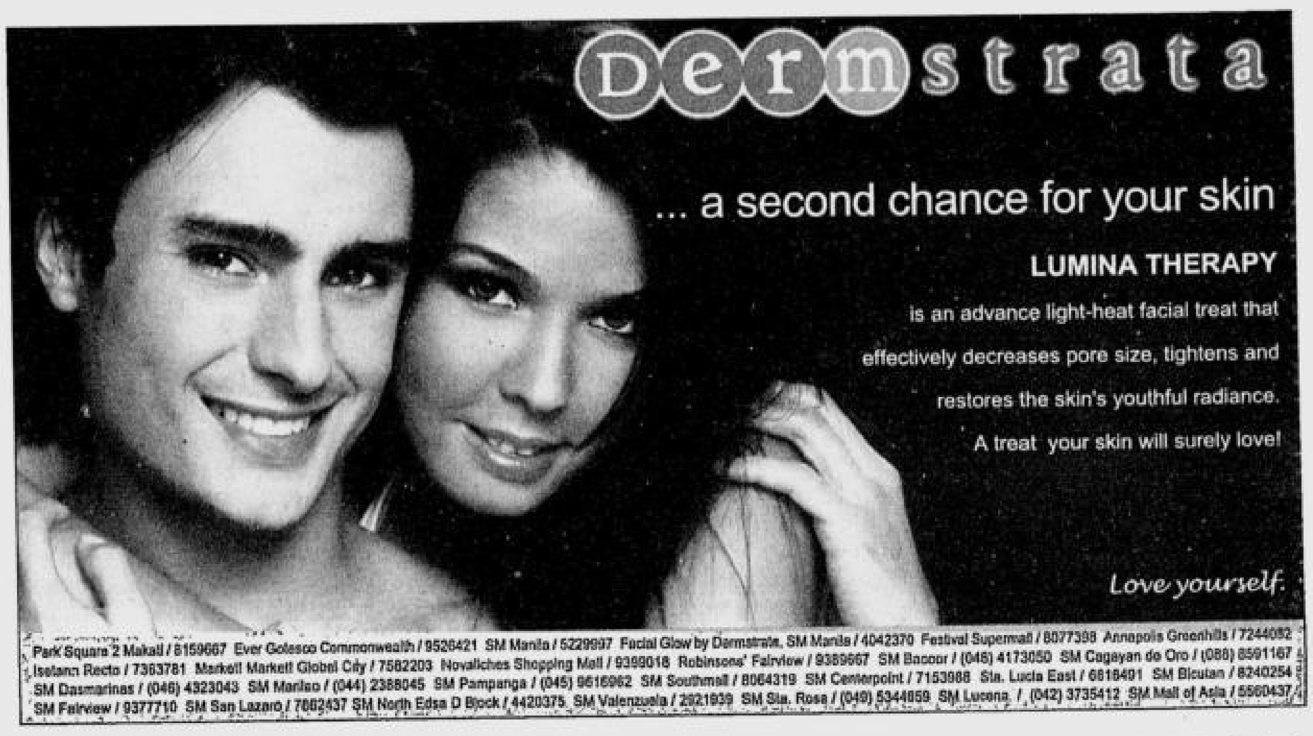

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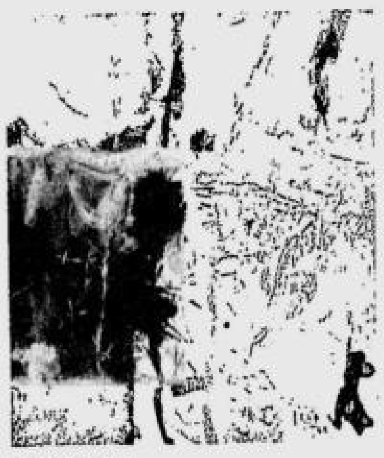
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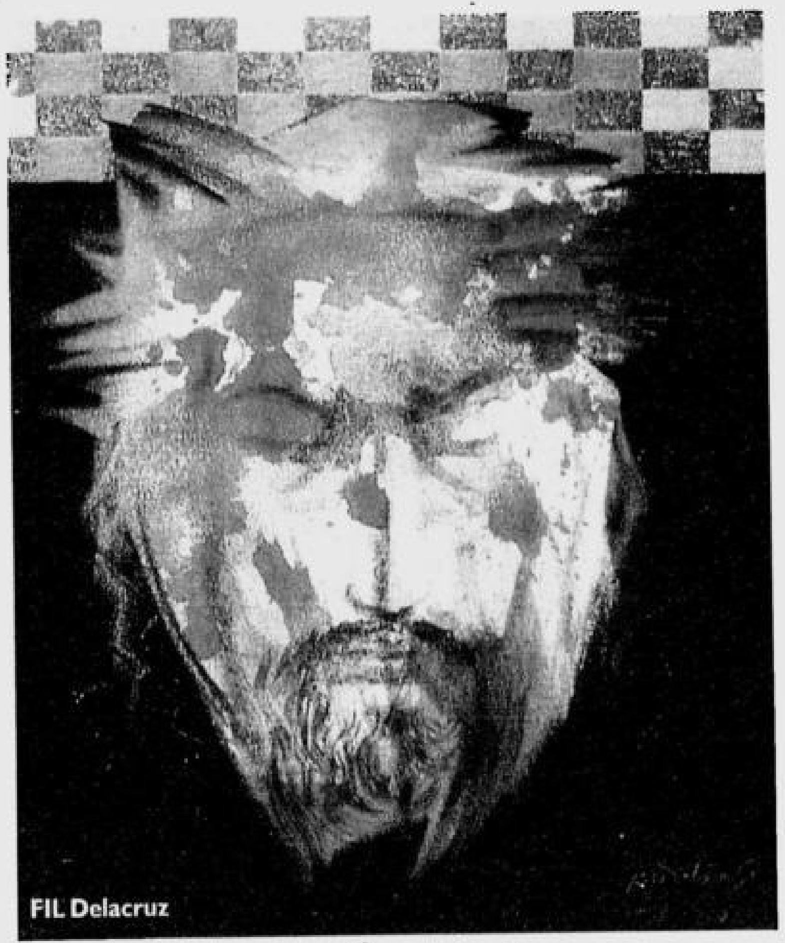
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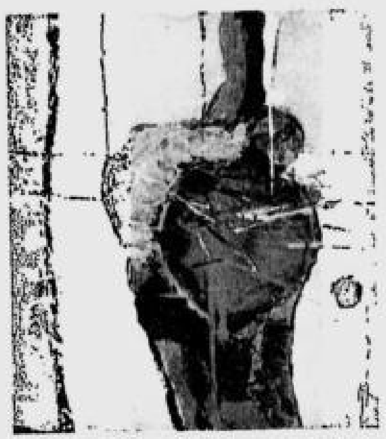
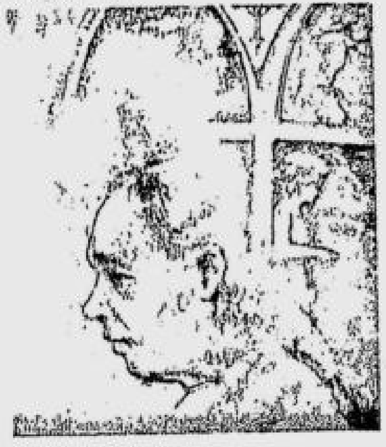
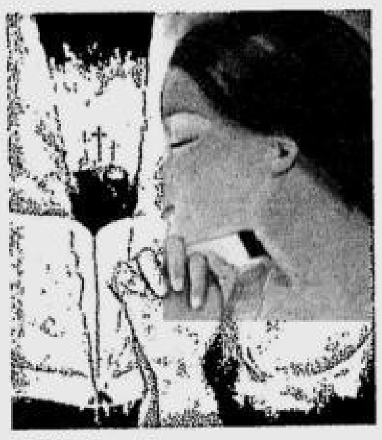

ANTON Balao (above) and Mark Magistrado

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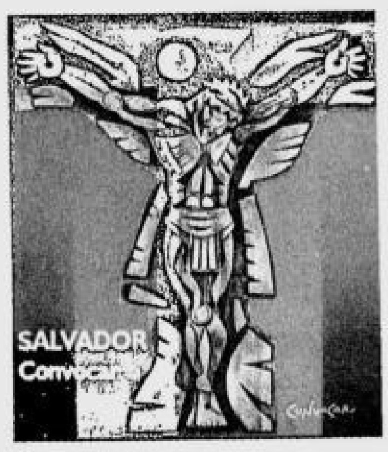
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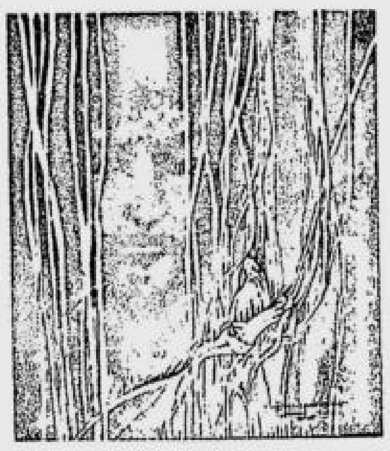

ANA de Leon

Artists interpret Christ's Passion

"INTO THY HANDS," THE "Kristo" exhibit for 2007, is running at 1/of Gallery in Serendra, Bonifacio Global City, Taguig, and at Choice Expression Gallery on Jupiter Street, Makati, until April 14.

"Kristo" was pioneered by Salvador Ching in Bulacan as *panata* (religious vow) every Lent. The group exhibit featured artists' reflections on the Passion of Christ.

In 2005, The Artery group brought the Lenten art show to Manila for the first time as "Sabachthani," a gathering of 46 emergent and established visual artists.

Last year, over 50 artists participated in "Behold."

This year, the "Kristo" exhibit's title is "Into Thy Hands," taken from Christ's last words on the cross before He breathed His last.

Participating artists are Agang Maganda, Hermes Alegre, Nune Alvarado, Jun Alvarez, Felix Amoncio, Jovito Andres, Ral Arrogante, Julio Austria, Virgilio Aviado, Yeye Babatuan, Aris Bagtas, Anton Balao, Jeps Belen, Art Bermido, Remy Boquiren, Angel Cacnio, Michael Cacnio, Froilan Calayag, Buen Calubayan, Roen Capule, Noel Catacutan, Ching, Salvador Convocar, Marina Cruz, Melvin Culaba, Popoy Cusi, Ana de Leon, Farley del Rosario, Fil Delacruz, Camille de la Rosa, Robert Deniega, Ferdinand Doctolero, Norman Dreo, Anthony Fermin, Caloy Gabuco, José Ibay, Dante Lerma, Lindslee, Ted Maddela, Mark Magistrado, Malang, Jun Martinez, Jason Montinola, Roel Obemio, Wilfredo Offemaria, Nemiranda, Jaime Pacena, Lynard Paras, Al Perez, Brenda Praico, Fred Ramirez, Cris Rebutiaco, Omi Reyes, Danny Santiago, Fidel Sarmiento, Aner Sebastian, Rodel Tapaya, Palma Tayona, Gonzalo Uy, Joey Velasco, Lydia Velasco, Joseph Villamar, Alvin Villaruel, Janice Young and James Zabala.

The exhibit is curated by Jocelyn Tullao-Calubayan of the UST College of Fine Arts and Design. She obtained her master's degree in Cultural Heritage at the UST Graduate School after an internship at the Cleveland Museum of Art, USA.

Assistant curator is Buen Calubayan, also of the UST College of Fine Arts and Design.

All works have been priced uniformly. Part of the proceeds will benefit the A Better Chance (ABC) Foundation. Call 9013152 and 8990718.

THE ARTIST with guest of honor, fashion designer Grace Edwards, Consul General Cecilia Rebong, artist Dulce Dee and general manager Gavino Abaya

NEW York documentary filmmaker Gary Keys

ARTIST Rico Lascano with Conde Nast photographer Matt Wakem

NATALIE Stern of New York's Stern Gallery admires 8-year-old Miro Lascano's painting. Also in photo are Rico, Chachu and Tracey Lascano.

NICHOLAS and Victoria Mascetta invite the Lascanos for lunch at Waldorf Hotel's Oscars. Sorrell Publishing has reportedly shown interest in representing the Filipino artist in New York.

'Satori' in New York

AT THE HEIGHT OF WINTRY weather, artist Rico Lascano elicited warm and most inspiring appreciation from an interesting mix of Filipino and foreign guests at his first New York exhibit at the Philippine Center.

Consul General Cecilia Rebong and Philippine Center general manager Gavino Abaya also graced the event, welcoming and mingling with the crowd.

The usually unfazed New Yorkers were drawn to Lascano's meditative "Satori" series, a collection of paintings that art critic Cid Reyes described as "an oasis of the spirit evoking a sensation that illuminates a visual experience of interior luminosity."

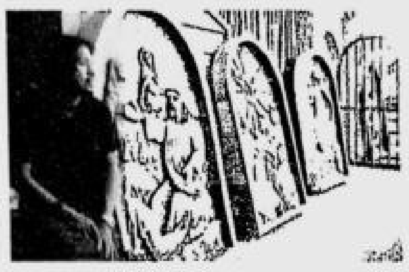
Following a very contemporary Oriental theme, Lascano's contemplative Zen landscapes wove a quiet spell as viewers found themselves connecting with the artist's own voyage toward personal enlightenment.

VISUAL ARTS

Magno in Singapore

Internationally renowned abstract artist Carlo Magno opens Galerie Joaquin Singapore's summer season with a special show, "Theory of Mind," March 30, 7 p.m. The artist's 23rd one-man exhibit features 18 artworks especially done for Singapore. Galerie Joaquin is located at The Regent Hotel, 1 Cuscaden Road, G/F, Unit 3 Singapore 249715; tel. (65) 67253113. Visit www.galeriejoaquin.com.

Nemiranda at Nine, Antipolo


NEMIRANDA

Nemiranda will hold a Lenten art exhibit, "The Way of Mary," at Gallery Nine (4/F, SM Megamall), which will open March 28, 6 p.m., and at the Nemiranda Art Café and Restaurant in Angono, Rizal, which will open Palm Sunday at 4 p.m. The show depicts the 20 mysteries of the Holy Rosary. On exhibit are limited-edition bass-relief pieces which are replicas of the life-size shrines found along the 14-km stretch along Ortigas Avenue, from the Edsa Shrine of Our Lady of Peace to the Antipolo Shrine of Our Lady of Peace and Good Voyage. Call Gallery Nine at 6877302.

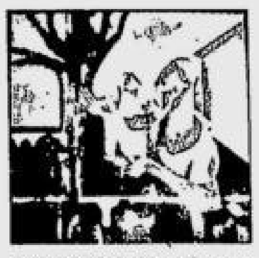
Mabanta at Eastwood

Roman "Jiggs" Mabanta III presents his second one-man exhibit of acrylic, pastel and oil paintings until March 30 at the Cinema Lobby, 4/F, Citywalk 2, Eastwood City, Libis, QC.

Campos, Cubillo and Sy at Crucible

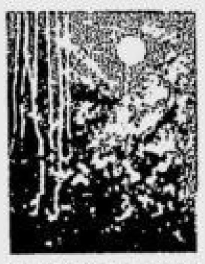
"Kalawang at Lipunan," an exhibit by Demosthenes Campos, Eugenio Cubillo II and Dexter Sy, opens 6 p.m. tomorrow at the Crucible Gallery, 4/L, Bldg. A., SM Megamall, Mandaluyong City. The exhibit features recent artworks which interpret the destruction of today's society, as reflected in the corrosive nature of *kalawang* or rust. The exhibit runs until April 8.

Ongchangco at Big & Small


BY CARLO Ongchangco

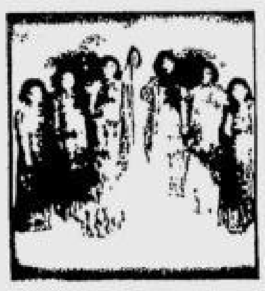
Saturday Group member Carlo Ongchangco mounts his third solo exhibit, "Frail," March 29-April 7 at Big & Small Art Company, 4/F, Bldg. A, SM Megamall, Mandaluyong City. Ongchangco will exhibit acrylic-on-canvas works on spirituality. Call 6877425.

Group exhibit at Blanc


"POPULATION" II, by Emmanuel Servito

John Paul Antido, Jaime Gubaton and Emmanuel Servito are featured in "Here Comes the Sun," on view at Blanc Art Space (107 HV dela Costa St., Salcedo Village, Makati City) until March 31. The exhibit is a tribute to the sun and its relation to various energies and activities. Call 7520032 or 0920-9276436.

Cavestany at Ayala Museum


"UNTITLED," by Valeria Cavestany

"China Gaze," a collection of light boxes, acrylic portraits and works on paper by artist Valeria Cavestany, are on view until May 27 in the Ayala Museum. A contemporary look on the country's Chinese heritage, the show consists of works that are a hybrid of two worlds and of different techniques. Cavestany explores her gaze on two surfaces: light boxes and traditional canvas. Call 7577117-21.

Workshop at Ayala Museum

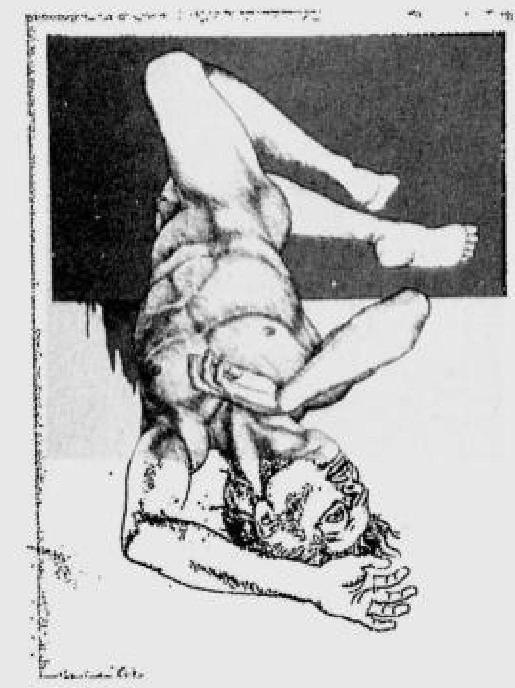
Ayala Museum presents a two-day workshop on learning alternative systems of distributing art, "Outside the White Cube," March 24 and 28. Yumi Janairo Roth will facilitate the workshop. Roth is the chair of the Artists Exchange Program and assistant professor of sculpture and associate chair of graduate studies of the Department of Art and Art History from the University of Colorado-Boulder, USA. Registration fee is P500. Limited slots available. Call 7577117-21 local 14, 0917-8066611, or visit www.ayalamuseum.org for details.

Summer art classes

My Masterpiece Arts Center (along Libis, QC) offers personalized summer classes for all ages. The creative programs include classes in art, music, imaginative writing, creative drama, dance and Mac multimedia. The summer term starts April 9 and runs until May 31. Sessions are scheduled twice a week. Call 3955028 or 0915-4327439 for details.

CELEBRATING International Women's Month, the Zonta Club of Makati and Environs Foundation Inc. are holding the exhibit "Women Caring for Other Women" until April 4 in Art Gallery Philippines, Glorietta 4, Ayala Center, Makati. On display are works by seven women artists, including Camille de la Rosa (standing, in yellow shirt), and (from left) Linda Panlilio, Fanny Blanco, Chona Lopez, Bebet Nograles, Lita Gelano, Ethel Dimacuha, Maritess Pineda and Fely Lopez. Proceeds will go to women's projects.

The agony and ecstasy of Tomas Concepcion


"IRAQ"

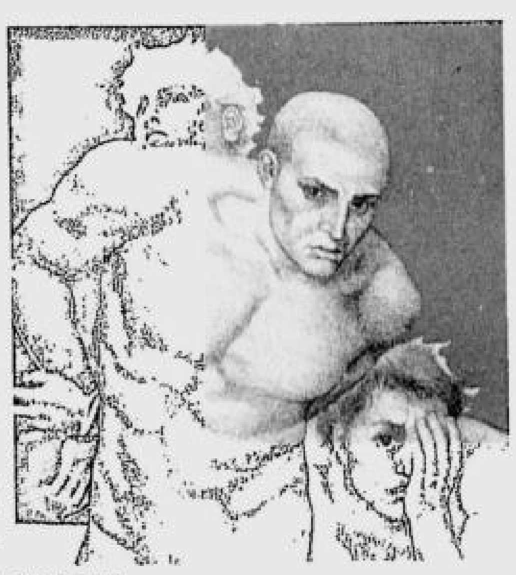
From page C1

Concepcion.

With his days in politics behind him, Concepcion remains outspoken in discussing his views about the current Philippine situation. The same can be said about the pieces for his "Homage to Michaelangelo" exhibit that opens at Galleria Duemila on March 31.

The large-scale paintings, lithographs and sculptures are sure to evoke emotion, in the tradition of the protean body of work of the great Renaissance artist.

"Art is not about putting people to sleep," Concepcion said. "It should make them think, make them feel, excite them, disgust them, move them. Art should be provocative."


"IRAQ" I

Concepcion feels very honored to be sponsored by the Italian Embassy, a first for a non-Italian. Concepcion explains that he intends to reintroduce the Renaissance to Filipino art lovers.

"Michaelangelo was so modern," he said. "Before Michaelangelo, all the figures were stiff. With his passion for humanity, glorifying God's creation, he twisted the bodies, made the sculptures look alive. So I have fallen in love with Michaelangelo. He's a fascinating and tormented artist."

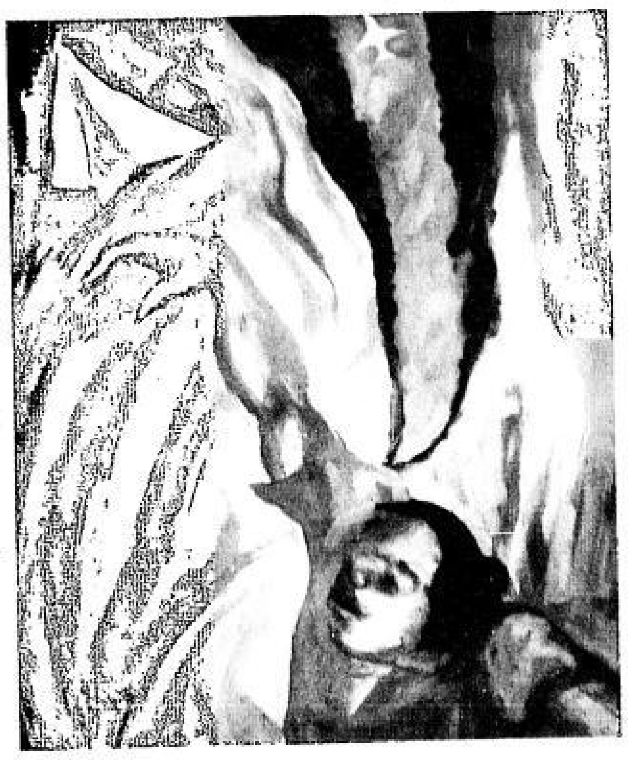
His lithographs, "Love Signs," are something to look forward to as they interpret the zodiac signs in a sexual manner.

While the 70something Concepcion continues to make up for lost time with his art, he is also working on his biography, which, according to him, will start with his first sexual experience and end with his stint in politics.

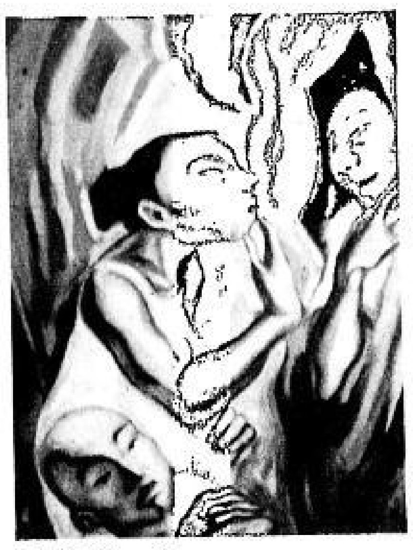
"I'm enjoying writing," Concepcion said. "It will be two books. The other one will focus on my life in Rome because that part is so rich."

"Homage to Michaelangelo" will run March 31-April 30 at Galleria Duemila, 210 Loring St., Pasay. Call 831-9990 or fax 8339815. E-mail duemila @mydestiny.net or visit www.galleriaduemila.com

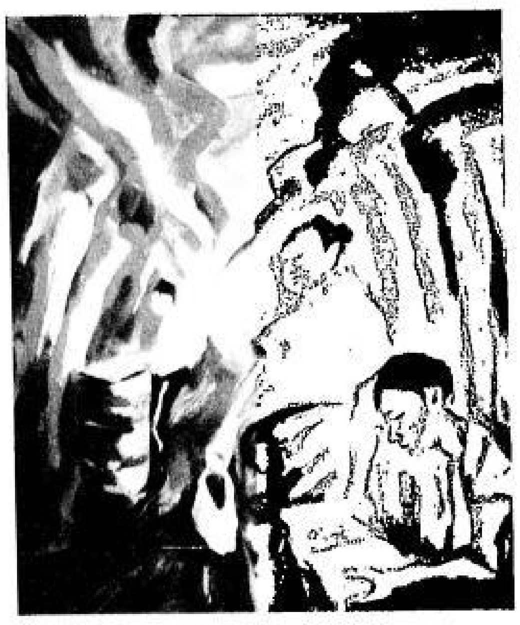
E-mail the author at dxmatilla@yahoo.com



"LIPAD" I



"STOP Over"



"SA ESQUINITA"

A kinder, gentler view of the Big City

By Constantino C. Tejero

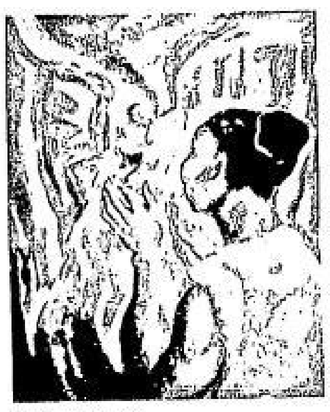
VINCENT PADILLA, A FINE ARTS graduate from University of the Philippines, was one of five Philippine representatives in the Asean Art Awards held in Bangkok three years ago. After that, we haven't heard much from him.

Now he has come out with his third solo exhibit, "Eskinita," 38 pieces in oil and acrylic on canvas and paper, until March 31 in Le Soufflé, G/F, Amorsolo Tower, Amorsolo Drive, Rockwell Center, Makati.

The exhibit's title is from the Spanish *esquinita*, or "a small corner of a room or street." The pieces depict vignettes of street life rendered in flowing lines and fluid patches of red, brown, yellow, orange, pink, with accentuation of blue, green, violet, purple.

The expressionistic technique is rampant in the spontaneous brushwork, expressive line, formal distortion, bold colorism. And as with many young artists working in this vein (in which the baldheaded figures popularized by Onib Olmedo often crop up), it is expressionism with social-realist content.

But this time the social realism is not hard-hearted but soft at the center. This much the exhibition note admits: "The *eskinitas* have a daunting reputation of being a den of bad elements, a harbor of the ills of society, and an eyesore. But the artist sees them in a different light."



"PAALAM"

Padilla is specifically depicting the small streets of Hulo in Mandaluyong, where he spent most of his childhood and early years as artist. On the other side of these *eskinitas* is a view of Makati's highrises—a perfect foil, and the right contrast of lowlife and high life to inspire the artist. The place, therefore, was both his playground and training ground.

Typical is the piece "Sa Eskinita," with its *istambay*, passerby and vendor crammed into an alley walled in by tall buildings and a patch of blue.

"Stop Over" depicts neighbors gossiping. "Pati Gulong" shows a snatcher hauling not just the bag of his victim but also spare parts of a vehicle such as a steering wheel. "Tara Na" has a *barkada* of youngsters going kite-flying.

Even in so cramped a place as an alley, solitude is a fact of life, as in "Sketching Session," with what could be a self-portrait of the artist recording the passing world. Or "Lakad," with a boy lost in thoughts as to what to do or where to go. Or "Soloista," with a young man and his guitar sending plaintive melodies into the night air.

However, some solitary beings are at play, as the woman and the boy sending paper planes into the air in "Lipad" 1-2. Or the boy poised to fly a kite in "Pangarap." Or another boy tugging at his improvised toy truck in "Hot Wheels."

Most of these pieces are portraits of father and son or mother and child. "Yakap" has a mother embracing her daughter on an impulse. "Paalam" has another mother sending off her schoolboy in the alley.

In "Nandito Na si Nanay," a working mother is being welcomed home by her gleeful kid at the end of the day.

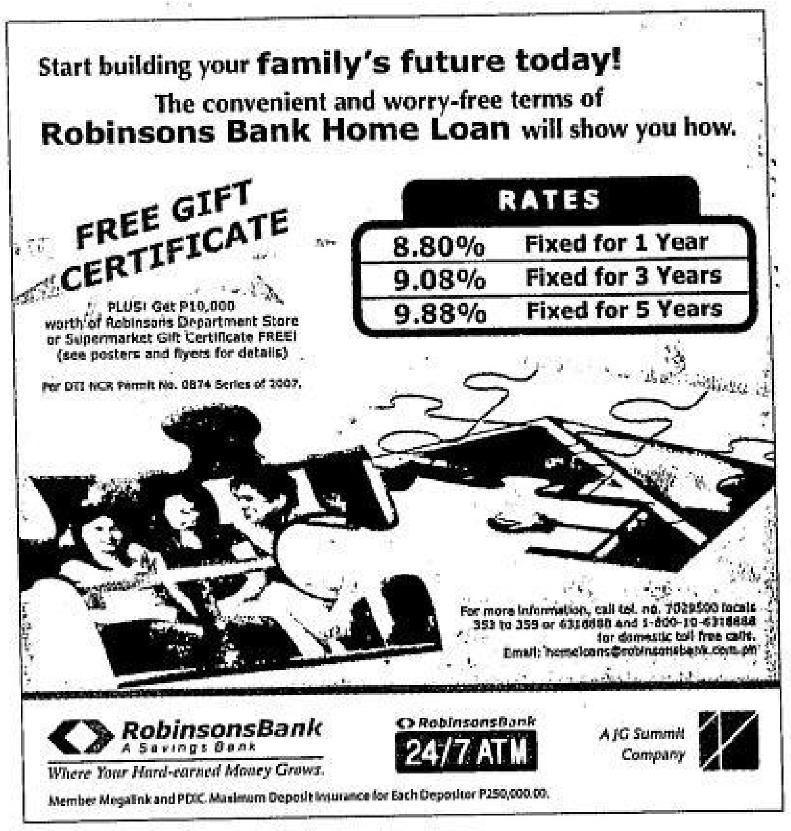
In "Uyayi," a man is putting his boy to sleep with a lullaby. In "Payo," a father is having a heart-to-heart talk with his son.

"Pasan" has a man carrying a boy on his shoulders on the way somewhere. In "Pauwi 2," a boy is sleeping on his father's back on their way home.

One of the most poignant is "Panalo Kami ni Itay," with a boy sleeping in his father's arm while holding on to a tattered kite on their way home, presumably from a kite-flying contest, weary but triumphant.

The inherent sentimentalism of these scenes has been leavened by the rough texture of their rendering. It is a reflection of Padilla's skill as artist to have attained this delicate balance between theme and technique.

But the richer irony is, these are visions of a depressed area brought right into a high-end gallery-restaurant in one of the most upscale addresses in Metro Manila, the better for fine diners to appreciate.



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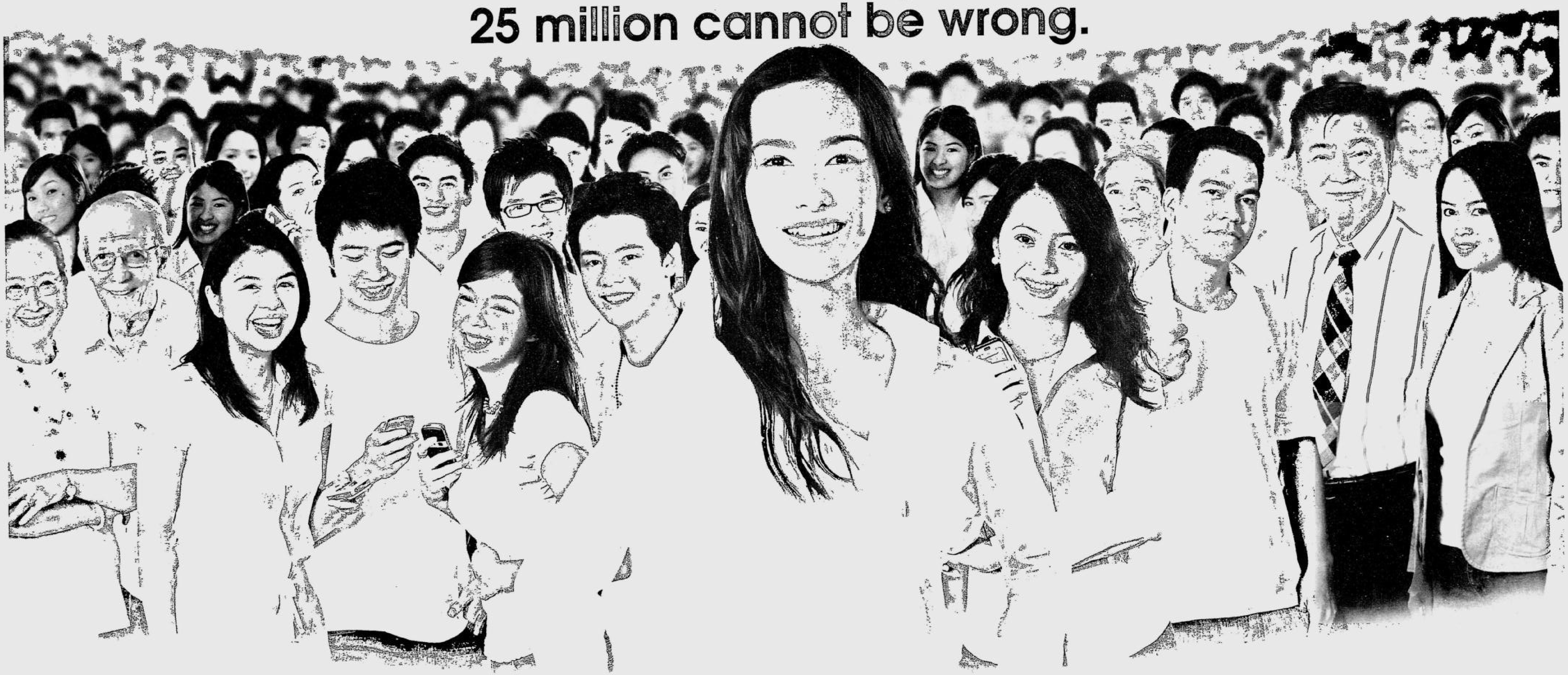

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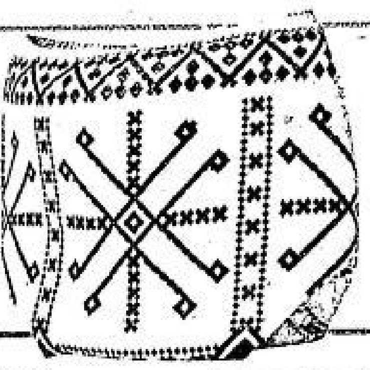

THE CROSS-LIKE design on this Hanunuo bag is called *pakudos*. Formerly to ward off evil spirits, it is now used as decoration for traditional blouses, accessories and crafts.

ELABORATE baskets woven by the Iraya Mangyan

Opening tonight at the GSIS Museum, an exhibit on Mangyan culture shows a rich and unique heritage

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PRIDE OF PLACE
Augusto Villalon

The Mangyans of Mindoro

HERITAGE COVERS SUCH SCOPE that its totality is difficult to grasp. Many of us compartmentalize heritage into one of its many components: music, dance, visual arts, architecture, literature, language, costumes, cuisine, depending on where our interests may happen to lie.

Often we fail to realize that all of the components interrelate, that each component forms a vital part that weaves into the splendid tapestry of our own national identity.

Focused (or hung up) as many of us might be on Philippine lowland Christian culture, our many cultural communities and indigenous peoples have gone unnoticed and misunderstood.

Among them are the Mangyans of Mindoro.

The Philippines is an archipelago of 7,107 islands with a population of 84 million speaking over 120 languages.

Out of the 110 indigenous peoples (IP) groups in the country today, only four still use their original scripts. Other ethno-linguistic groups now write in the Roman alphabet of the colonizers.

The endangered script of the Hanunuo and Buhid Mangyans from Mindoro, and of the Tagbanua and Palawan tribes from Palawan were declared National Cultural Treasures in 1997, and were inscribed in the Unesco (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) Memory of the World Register in 1999.

However, the Hanunuo Mangyan script is very much alive and being taught in Hanunuo Mangyan schools.

Mangyan is the generic name for the eight IP groups found in the mountainous regions of Mindoro island—the Alangan, Bangon, Buhid, Hanunuo, Iraya, Ratagnon, Tadywan and Taubuid, a combined population of 100,000.

Distinctive heritage

Mangyans, with eight different languages and cultural traditions, possess a rich and distinctive cultural and literary heritage. One manifestation is the various traditional musical instruments used during festivities, special occasions and for courting: guitar, violin, flute, gong, and jew's-harp.

With a pointed knife, Hanunuo Mangyans inscribe notes and poems on bamboo trees in the forests or on bamboo slats. These *ambahans*—written or recited in poetic language—allegorically express situations or characteristics.

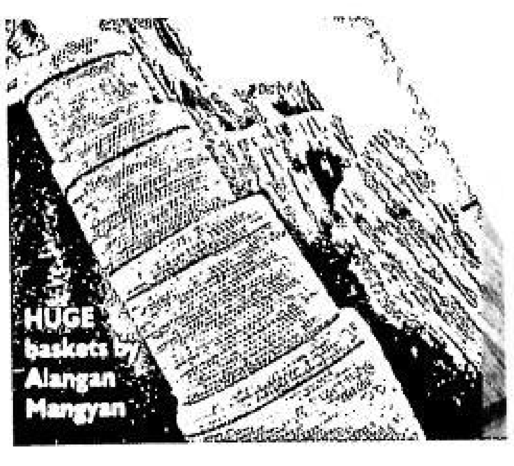
The Hanunuo and Buhid Mangyans weave and embroider their own traditional attire. The Iraya and Alangan Mangyans skillfully weave *nito* and rattan into elaborate baskets. The other groups also produce baskets, bags, hats, hammocks and other crafts made of forest vines, and all the eight tribes practice beadwork. These are a main source of their livelihood.

Mangyans plant upland rice, corn, beans, bananas and root crops using swidden farming done in total reverence for the environment.

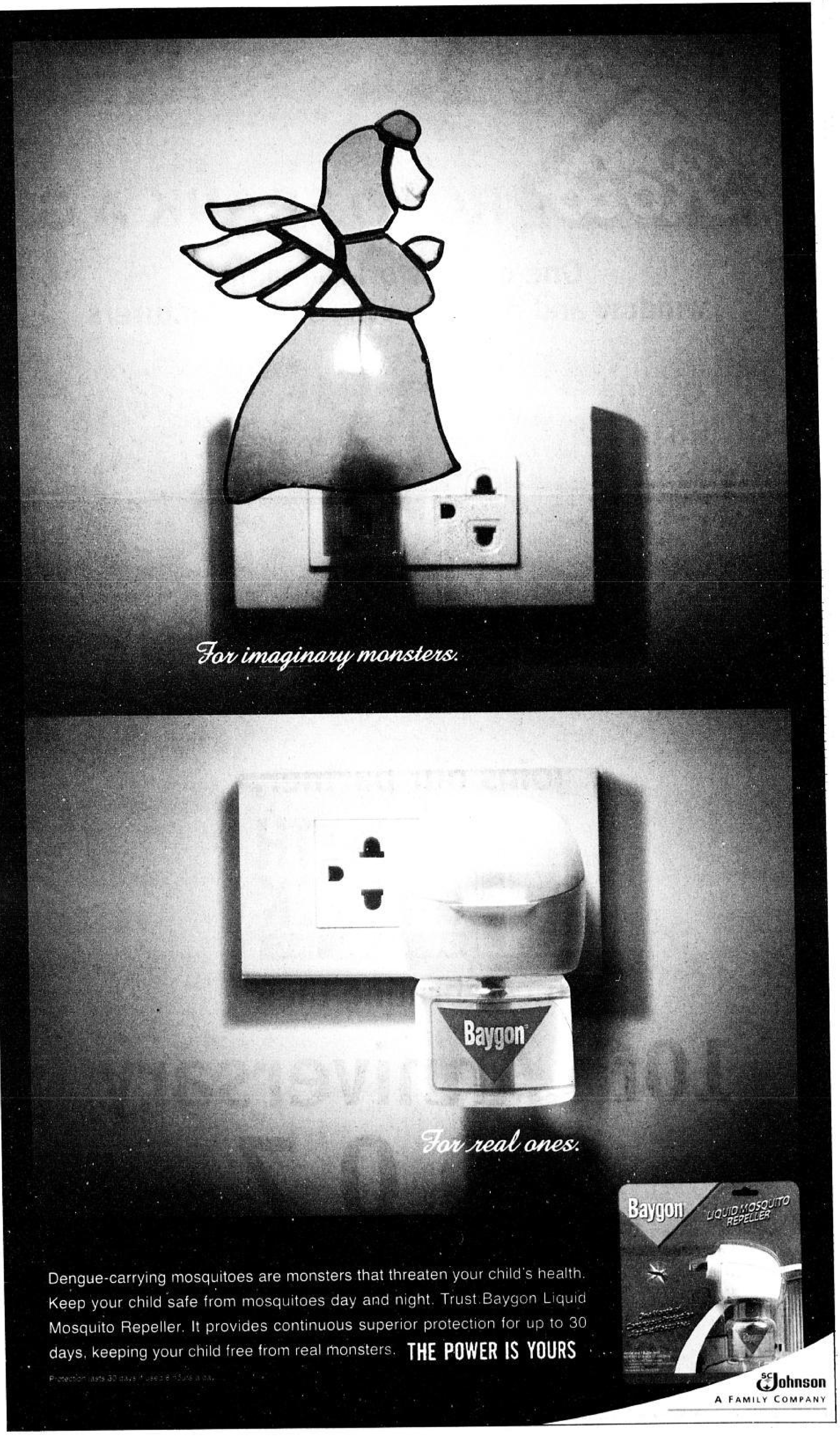
Mangyans have strongly retained their cultural identity. Much of their traditions and beliefs are in practice, despite some having converted to Christianity. Intermarriage with non-Mangyans is limited.

The Mangyans, considered as the first inhabitants of the island of Mindoro, believe that "land is life" and from it emanates their distinct and rich culture.

THE MANGYANS/ D4



HUGE baskets by Alangan Mangyan



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Established in 1997, Kenneth & Mock Designs, Inc., a partnership of Filipino and Swiss entrepreneurs, brought high quality and genuine European window and door products and accessories into the local market. They are the very first company in the country to offer world-class quality German-made PVC-U windows and doors that are rot-resistant and practically maintenance-free. These profiles from the world-famous Kömmerling brand are also durable and made from environment-friendly materials, and can therefore last for a very long time. "When we started, PVC-U windows were still quite unknown in the country," says Kenneth Lao, president of Kenneth & Mock Designs, Inc. "However, it was already very popular in Europe. So we decided to bring in this technology to the Philippines. Kömmerling, being the no.1 in Europe, was our 1st choice as the quality is excellent and unparalleled. Knowing that the timing was right, and the market was ready, we decided to bring in Kömmerling windows from Germany."

Kenneth & Mock, choice of some of the most discriminating homes in the country.

"During that time, more and more people were also investing in free-standing homes, not just condominium units," adds Stephanie delos Santos, VP for Marketing. "So we wanted homeowners to get real value for their money and make investments in their homes that will really stand the test of time."

Helping Protect the Environment

What makes Kenneth & Mock windows and door unique is that they use a special compound calle Komalit Z in making their profiles. Komalit Z make the profiles suitable for tropical weather an withstand harmful UV rays. "What people don' realize is that European profiles are not suitable t our climate as our weather is very different fron Europe unless they have added formulation especially suited for the tropics." Lao emphasizes

Another breakthrough innovation is *greenline*, a exclusively formulated calcium-zinc stabilizer tha improves the profiles' resilience against weather damag and is totally lead-free. "Kenneth & Mock window are the only lead-free PVC-U windows in the countr You would be surprised that Filipinos nowadays ar more environmentally conscious, especially those wh travel a lot. Moreover, as the move towards ecologica awareness gains ground, several countries like Denmark certain cities in Germany, Switzerland, Austria an Australia (by 2008) have already disallowed th installation of leaded PVC-U windows. I am prou to say that the Philippines is not lagging behin these first world countries in using environmenta friendly products" adds Delos Santos

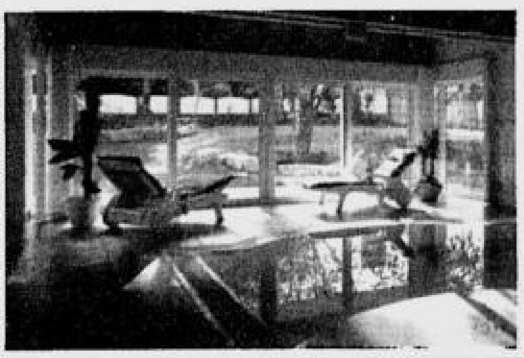
Safety and Innovation

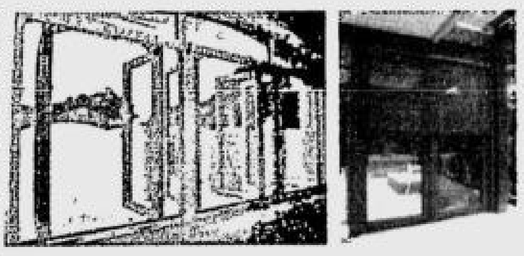
More than using pioneering technology in creatin unique window and door profiles, Kenneth & Moc is recognized for prioritizing the safety and protectio of each home. The company works with Roto-Fran Hardware Systems of Germany to introduce th multi-point locking mechanism of Kenneth & Mock's windows and doors. It also use synthetic rubber Ethylene Propylene Dien Monomer (EPDM) on sashes and frames t provide optimum sound reduction and defens from outdoor elements.

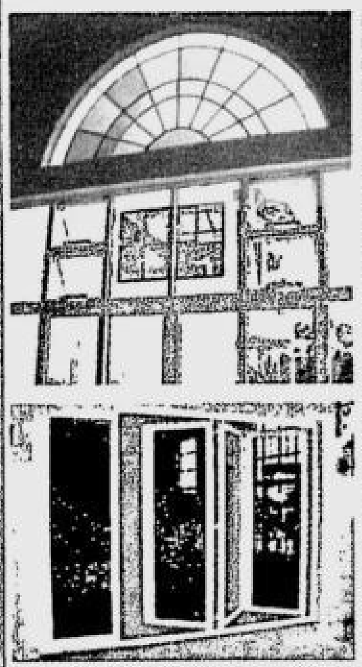
In 1998, Kenneth & Mock introduced the firs Italian roll-up insect screen system in the marke It is currently the only one with the Uni-Directiona Viscodynamic Clutch and Brake system. Thi allows screens to roll up slowly without snapping It also has the Anti-Wind Brush that keeps th screens in place even in very windy conditions

"For us, when people get Kenneth & Moc windows and doors, they're not just buyin windows, they're getting high quality product and service beyond compare," declares Lao

Kenneth & Mock is the first to introduce som of the now-famous window and door product that many homes around the world have bee using, such as the Tilt and Turn windows, th Motorized Awning windows, Fold and Slid Doors, and the latest and largest Premidoor Li and Slide, the perfect door for high ceilings an wide door widths.


(above) Kenneth & Mock's groundbreaking PREMIDOOR gives architects and designers more flexibility by making large panel sliding doors possible (H2.5mxW3m per panel). In addition, the PREMIDOOR design lets you slide them open with just three fingers!




(above) Kenneth & Mock's pioneering roll-up insect screen system. Featuring the unique Uni-Directional Viscodynamic Clutch and Brake system that lets the screen roll up slowly without snapping.

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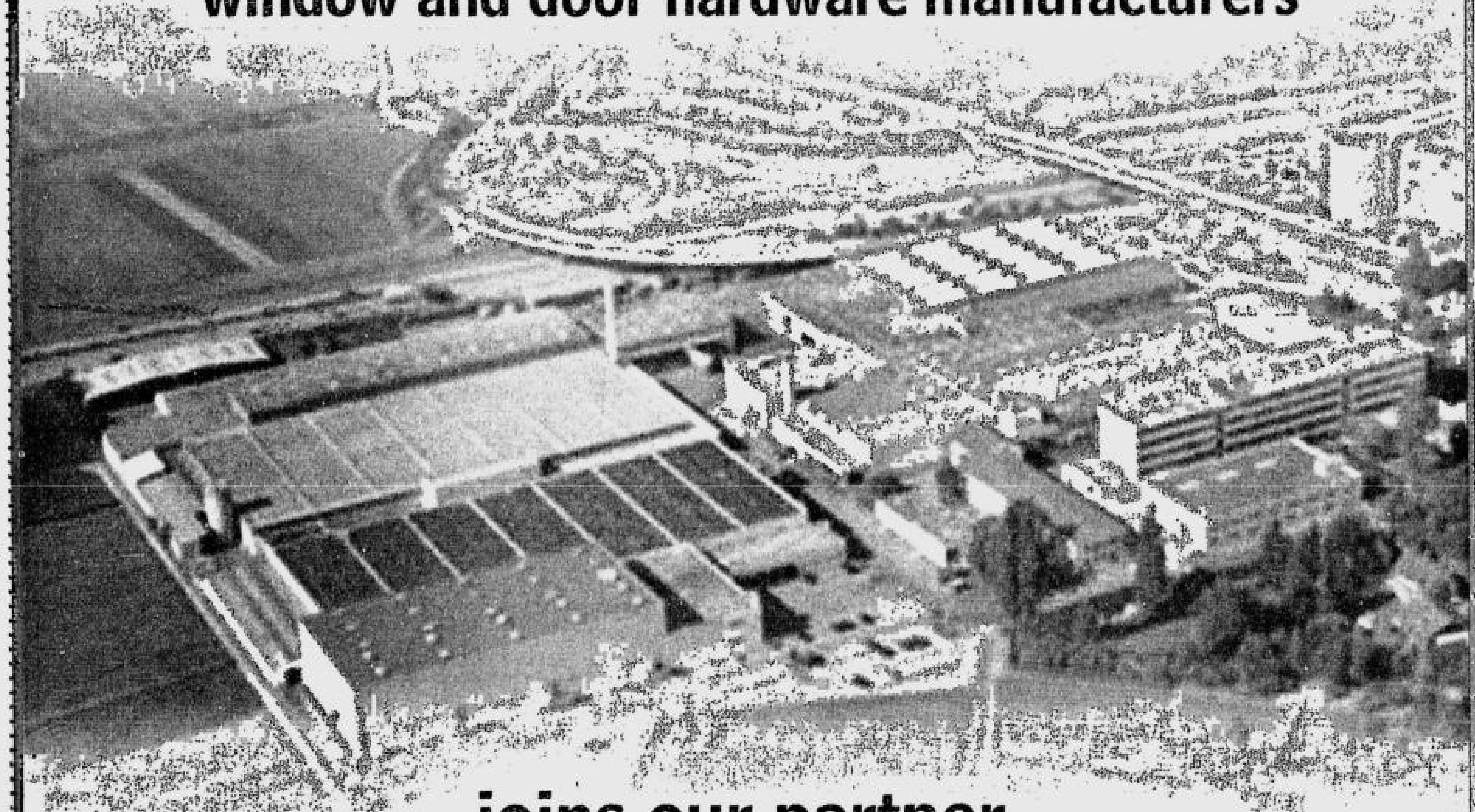

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Kenneth and Mock", with their high quality Kommerling products, has done an excellent job in my house which was built several years ago. The quality and durability of their frames, glass and screens are superb and they look brand new even after years of use and abuse. Their modern designs and looks perfectly fit my style of house. Moreover, K&M's after sales service is impeccable, although it was hardly ever needed.

Tom Stockinger
Chairman, Swiss Finance & Investment Corp.

We are proud to say that we have no regrets in our decision to use Kenneth & Mock windows and doors in our Batangas rest house. From the initial proposal, all the way to implementation, everyone in K&M has been nothing short of professional, from the sales representative, the supervisor to the installers. All under the excellent stewardship of Mr. Lao, who knows what the word service really means. Without hesitation, we highly recommend Kenneth & Mock world-class windows and doors.

Bobbit and Penny Panlilio, Punta Fuego

Our house was constructed more than eight years ago, and our windows were one of the first few projects using Kenneth & Mock's PVC-U material. Initially, we were reluctant to try this new material, but I am now proud to say that we have made the right decision in choosing Kenneth & Mock PVC-U windows because it is durable, rigid, doesn't warp and very easy to maintain. It can withstand strong winds without any vibration. It is air tight when closed. Their service is fast & efficient. No wonder Kenneth & Mock has grown to what it is today. Keep up the good work!

Lucy Ang, Greenhills

After four years of using Kenneth & Mock windows, I am really happy & fully satisfied with the product. Aside from the fact that it reduces the noise outside, it is also easy to maintain and there's no problem with rusting. I am glad my husband and I choose Kenneth & Mock. It will definitely last a lifetime!

Cynthia G. Arceo, Ayala Alabang

I first saw this type of window system in Germany during one of my conventions. Then thought: "When I build my house, I want to have this kind of windows." When I started building my home a year later, I went to the Worldbex Exhibit and I got to meet Kenneth Lao, who introduced me to Kenneth & Mock windows. "This is what I've been looking for!" I exclaimed. From the planning, revisions and installation, up to the qc and post installation services, everything was very meticulous and professionally done. After 7 years, our Kenneth & Mock windows/ doors have remained pristine white, with all the seals still intact, the hinges still aligned, the doors and windows still soundproof and above all rainproof and dustproof. "I can't ask anything more from a window system like Kenneth & Mock".

Our next home will definitely have Kenneth & Mock windows again.

Dr. Rory Go, Quezon City

Getting Kenneth & Mock windows is one of the best decisions I made for my house. I am very happy with the quality and the ever-reliable after sales service, which is why I never fail to recommend them to my friends in our community.

Dave Sahjwani, Magallanes Makati

"I am glad my husband and I chose Kenneth & Mock. It will definitely last a lifetime!"

- Cynthia G. Arceo

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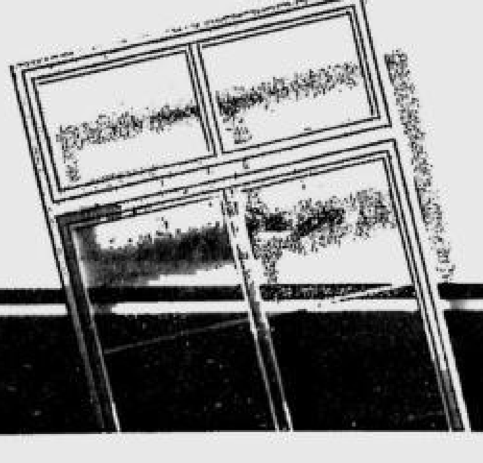

Don't forget DOH is an acronym, not a sarcastic expression.

Don't forget celebrity news is just celebrity news.

Don't forget there are other articles aside from your horoscope.

Don't forget Pacman refers to the boxing champion, not the videogame.

Don't forget a fact can be gossip.

Don't forget gossip can be a fact.

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The Mangyans of Mindoro

From page D1

Unfortunately they do not have security of land tenure. Their unrecognized traditional right over their ancestral domain is evident in the continuous influx of so-called government development projects. Private business interests have also harassed them: mining, tourism, hydro-power, and even reforestation. Illegal titling of lands by non-Mangyans also continues.

The implementation of these projects often undermines their culture and traditional right to protect, manage and utilize the resources in their ancestral domain. More important, the Mangyans have lost their land to these projects.

POINTED knife is used to write an *ambahan* (Mangyan poem) on a bamboo slat.

Mangyan settlements are mostly found in the interior, mountainous region of Mindoro, in land classified by the government as Forest Zone and Public Domain.

The Mangyans' subsistence-level livelihood is based on swidden cultivation: planting upland rice, sweet potatoes, corn, beans, bananas, cassava, yams and other root crops.

The few with low-lying farmland in irrigated areas have ventured into lowland farming, planting cash crops and permanent crops, particularly fruit trees. Some gather vines and firewood.

Most Mangyan settlements are not accessible by road. Rivers that flood during the rainy season separate settlements from each other, often cutting off direct access to government social services like education and health.

Mangyan education

There are few public elementary schools, no public high school, and no functional health center. Public elementary schools in Mangyan communities usually do not offer all the elementary grade levels. Classes are multi-grade. Teachers do not report regularly. There are few or no books at all for students.

Students walk for hours and make numerous river crossings to go to school, which can be dangerous for young children.

High expenses prevent attendance by Mangyans in high school, which are situated in the lowlands. Individual sponsors or nongovernment organizations support the few who do finish secondary and tertiary levels. Functional literacy for adults and out-of-school youth is continuously provided by nongovernment organizations and, lately, by the government.

Aside from educational problems, there also exists a difficulty of access to government health units or health centers, which are located in town centers or lowland communities.

Few Mangyan local government units or barangays have been established. The majority of the Mangyan population belongs to lowlander-led barangay units.

Before the last decade, no Mangyan was elected to a municipal or higher position, further limiting the indigenous people's opportunities to be heard and to participate in decision-making. There are also very few Mangyan government employees.

Discrimination by lowlanders hinders Mangyans from attaining the development level they deserve. Lowlanders often buy their products at very low prices. Often the Mangyans are exploited.

The Mangyan situation illustrates the complexity of heritage conservation. To preserve the endangered traditional script, language, literature, crafts and lifestyle, there is need to improve their education, livelihood and governance.

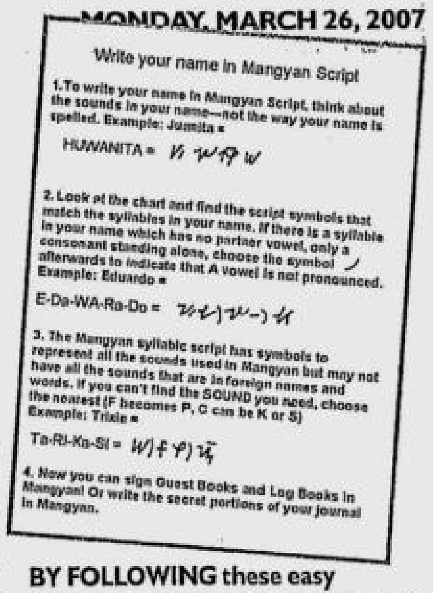
However, any government or NGO assistance given to the Mangyans must not be done in an insensitive manner. Any kind of help must be granted with vision—in the framework of true understanding of the Mangyan culture, ensuring its preservation, but also giving the people the benefits of the 21st century.

At 6 p.m. today, the Mangyan Heritage Center will launch a major exhibit on Mangyan culture at the GSIS Museum. The exhibit will feature old and contemporary photographs depicting the Mangyan's way of life; as well as artifacts from the different Mangyan tribes, such as the rich Hanunuo Mangyan poetry and syllabic script.

Elaborate Mangyan handicrafts, books and greeting cards will be available for sale. The exhibit runs until April 20, and is open Tuesday-Saturday, 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

To volunteer assistance, or to inquire about the purchase of Mangyan crafts and products, e-mail mangyanhc@catsi.net.ph or visit www.mangyan.org.

E-mail the author at pride.place@gmail.com


Write your name in Mangyan Script

1. To write your name in Mangyan Script, think about the sounds in your name—not the way your name is spelled. Example: Juanita =

HUWANITA =

2. Look at the chart and find the script symbols that match the syllables in your name. If there is a syllable in your name which has no partner vowel, only a consonant standing alone, choose the symbol afterwards to indicate that A vowel is not pronounced. Example: Eduardo =

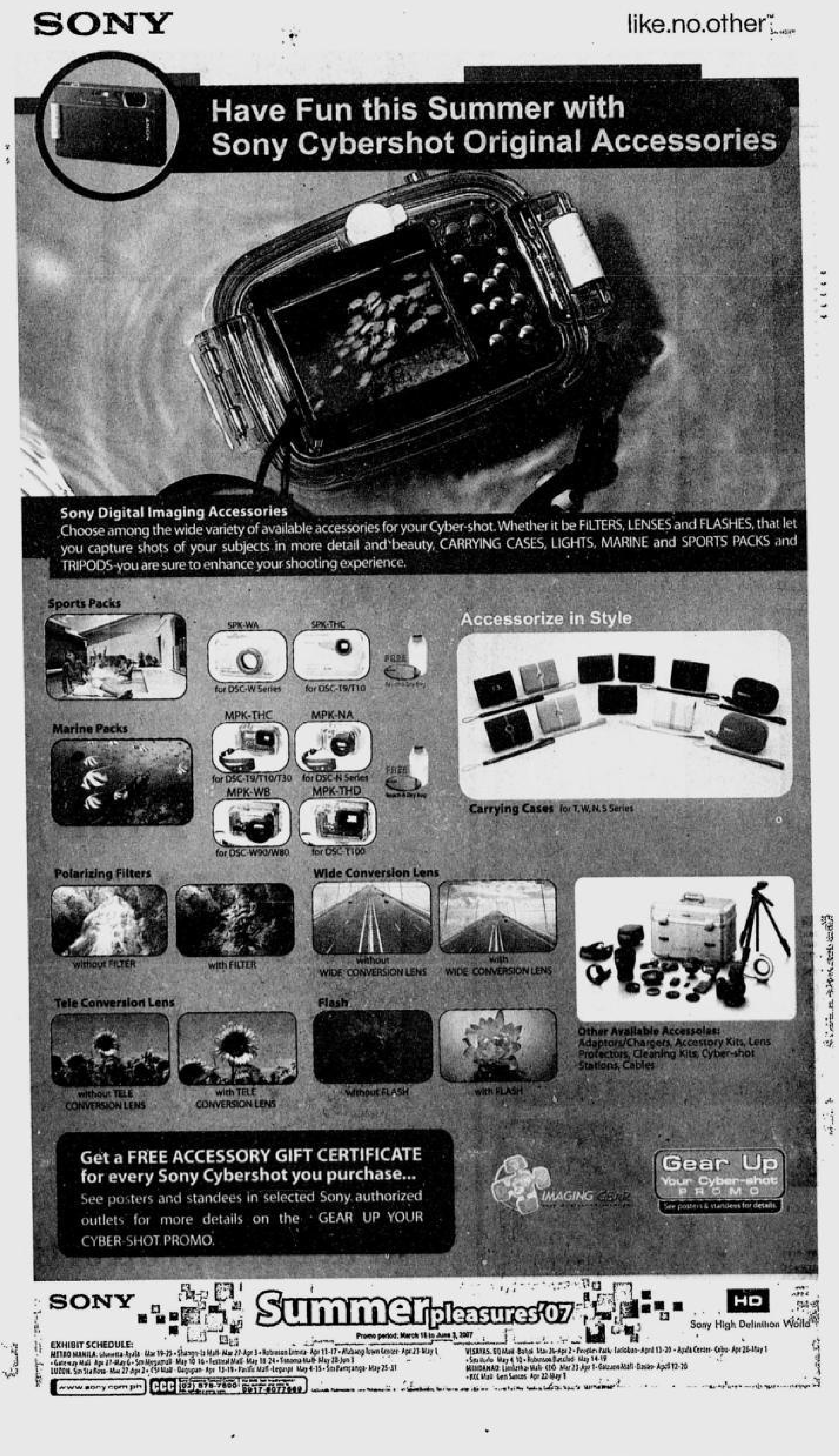
E-Da-WA-Ra-Do =

3. The Mangyan syllabic script has symbols to represent all the sounds used in Mangyan but may not have all the sounds that are in foreign names and words. If you can't find the SOUND you need, choose the nearest (F becomes P, C can be K or S) Example: Trixie =

Ta-Ri-Ka-Si =

4. Now you can sign Guest Books and Log Books in Mangyan! Or write the secret portions of your journal in Mangyan.

BY FOLLOWING these easy instructions, anyone can write one's name in Mangyan script when signing guest books!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Triumph of piano and genes

STORY ON PAGE E3

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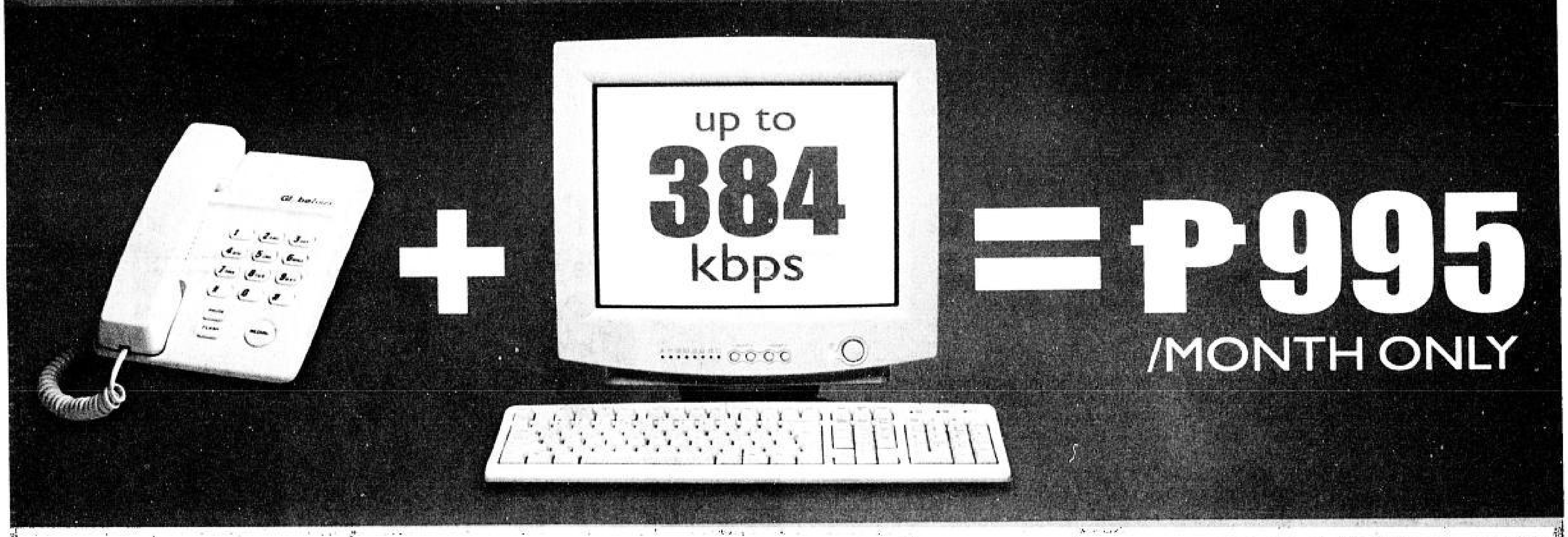

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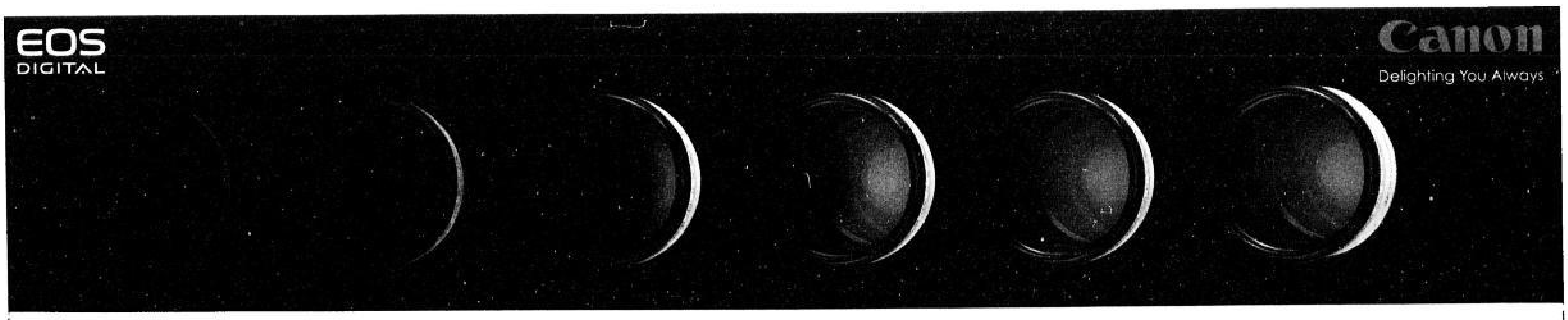

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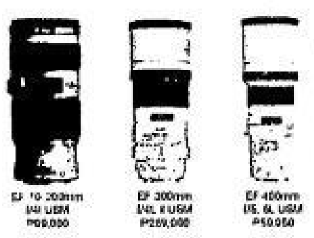

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Laguna awards Tony Mabesa 'brightest artist' for theater

Text and photos
By Niña Catherine Calleja
Inquirer Southern Luzon

STA. CRUZ, LAGUNA—Antonio "Tony" Mabesa is very proud of his hometown, saying it pays to grow up on the slopes of Mt. Makiling as it made him an artist.

For 50 years now, Mabesa has directed over 150 plays, appeared in almost 100 movies and TV series, and won various awards for theater. He is a professor emeritus at the University of the Philippines College of Arts and Letters.

Awarded with Gawad Pinakamaningning na Alagad ng Sining here recently, Mabesa said he felt overwhelmed to receive recognition from his *kababayan* (fellow residents of Laguna).

The award, says the Laguna Historical Arts and Council (Lahaco), aims to draw inspiration from nationally known artists born and raised in this province.

The other awardees were Dennis Santos for Allied Arts; Frank Rivera, Literature; Raul Lantican, Music; Lorelei de Viana, Architecture; Garilandy Vicuna, Visual Arts; Tony Fabella, Dance; and Carmina Villaroel, Film.

Lahaco also gave a posthumous award to Dr. Gregorio Zaide for History and Literature, and to National Artist José Maceda for Music.

First play

Born in Los Baños, Laguna, Mabesa studied in Makiling Elementary School and UP Rural High School in Los Baños.

His father was a professor and the first Filipino dean of the College of Forestry in the University of the Philippines Los Baños.

Mabesa clearly remembered the first play he directed in high school in 1949, "Dust of the Road," a one-act play in English.

The class usually staged plays, but in his sophomore year, his teacher requested him to take over the direction of a play.

"I asked my classmates to bring clothes and white sheets. Back then I had no training in basic directing," he recalled.

But at the time, he was already enthusiastic about theater. "During the war, my mother would often take me to see stage shows in Manila. And during those times, there were no movies. Actors from movies and radio would join stage actors for stage plays.

"My teachers in elementary then coached me in monologues," he added. His first monologue in grade school was a letter to Sta. Claus. "Some of my father's friends watched and praised my performance."

He was hooked from then on.

ANOTHER awardee is playwright Frank Rivera (middle, flanked by Laguna officials), recognized in the field of literature.

College days

Though a pre-medicine student in UP Diliman, Mabesa spent most of his time in theater.

He acted in plays under the direction of Wilfrido Ma. Guerrero, who would eventually be conferred National Artist for Theater.

But Mabesa went back to UP Los Baños to study Agriculture in 1954.

"In UPLB, I started to direct serious plays," he said.

His first directorial job was a full-length play titled "Sidney Kingsley," a detective story popular in the 1950s.

"When I was just starting directing, at first I was trying to imitate what my mentors in UP Diliman were doing," he said. "Back then I was working with Edgardo de la Cruz, who also made a name in theater, and the late Leo Rimando."

Mabesa went to the US to take up courses in theater after finishing his degree in UPLB.

"After that, I came back and joined the Department of Speech and Drama [now Department of Speech Communication and Theater Arts] in UP Diliman, and later on spearheaded the formation of the theater curriculum," he said.

With some 50 years of teaching behind him, Mabesa said he had fathered many children in theater. "Some of the best actors and key people in theater now were my former students."

Passion play

Mabesa still takes the time to visit Laguna at least once a month, relaxing with his family in their house in Los Baños.

At 72, he continues to direct plays and accept roles in films and TV series. As a professor emeritus at UP, he does one play a year for UP Diliman. He will be directing a *cenaculo*, "Martir sa Golgota," for the centennial celebration of UP next year.

He is now reviving "The Fantasticks," the longest-running off-Broadway musical play, to be staged in Angeles City, Pampanga.

Mabesa is also part of a new movie, "Silip," and is set to play a lawyer in the upcoming GMA-7 *teleserye* "Sinasamba Kita."

"I try to have a lot of energy in doing theater and acting in TV series and movies. It is just matter of discipline and time management," he said.

Mabesa has won various awards in theater and film, but the accomplishment he is most proud of, he said, is touching the lives of student artists who then went on to pursue the art of theater.

> The award aims to draw inspiration from nationally known artists born and raised in this province

DULAANG UP founding artistic director Tony Mabesa

Trumpets offers summer workshops

THIS SUMMER, TRUMPETS expands its performing arts workshops to Podium, apart from the workshops at Shangri-La Plaza mall. Acting master class and personality development classes have been added to the list of Trumpets Playshop courses that will entice any kid, teen or young adult alike to stay in the Metro during the hot summer months.

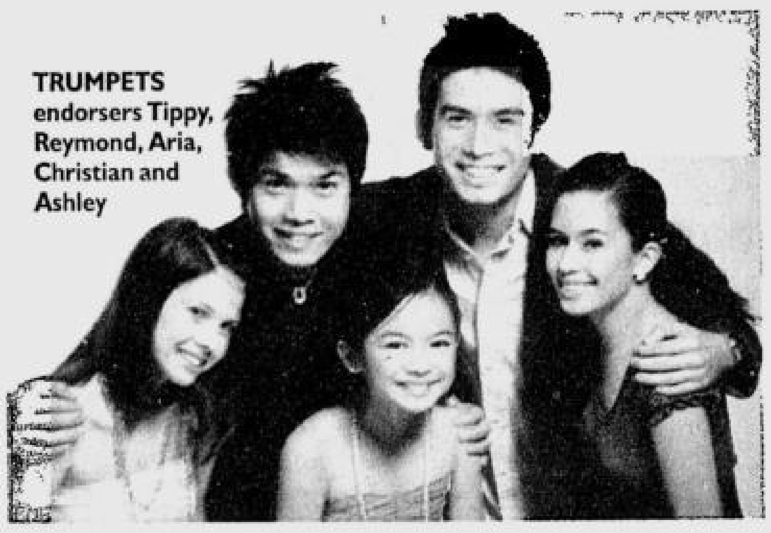
Now in its 14th year as a summer training ground for exemplary talents that have included Asian pop star Christian Bautista, Filipino teens' favorite star Sam Concepcion, first "Philippine Idol" finalist Reymond Sajor and the Playshop Kids, Trumpets Playshop rallies behind the theme, "Passing It On."

"It's been pure joy to pass on our years of experience in the performing arts to young learners summer after summer. Seeing Christian, Sam, Reymond, the Playshop Kids and the rest of our graduates making it big outside Trumpets is truly exhilarating for their respective teachers. It's like it has become our 'passion to pass it on.' We challenge everyone who's been part of Trumpets to pass on the torch in his/her own personal means and ways," says workshop consultant Audie Gemora.

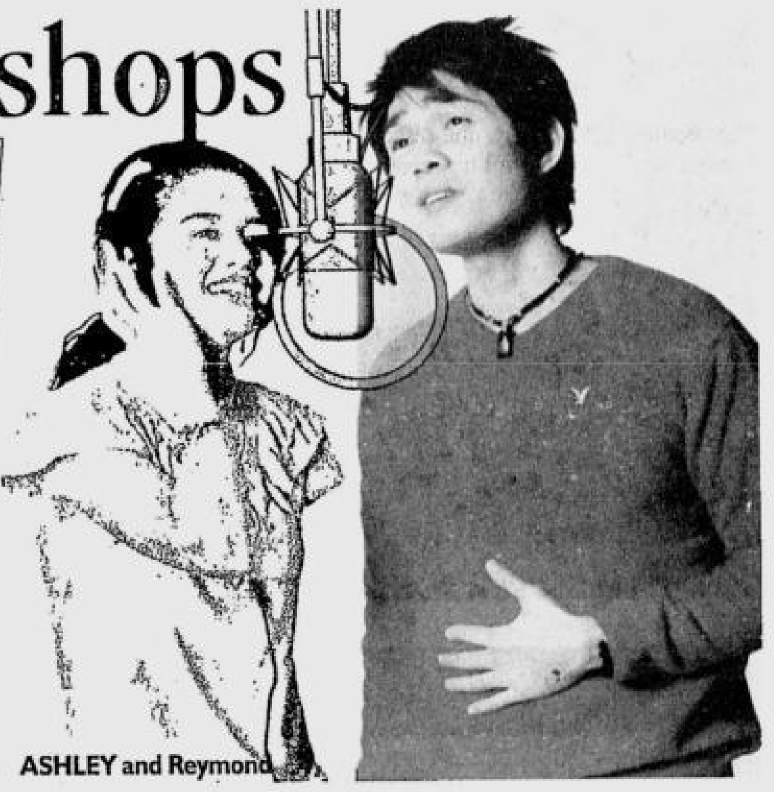
Trumpets Playshop, which has been consistently getting the biggest number of enrollees every year, offers Children's Theatre, Children's Musical Theatre, Children's Musical Theatre (Intermediate), Teens and Adults' Musical Theatre, Summer Stock, Teens and Adults' Basic Acting, Kids, Teens and Adults' Streetdancing, Children and Teens' Modeling, Streetdancing (Advance), Teens and Adults' Public Speaking and Hosting, Acting Master Class and Personality Development.

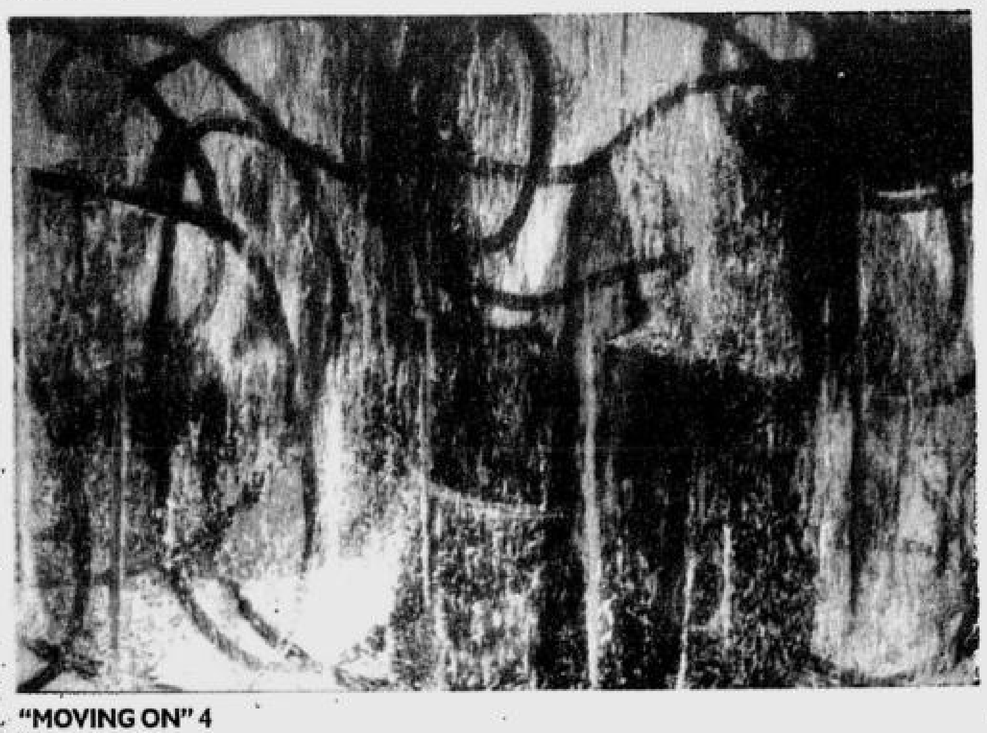
Trumpets Musicademy, Trumpets' year-round training facility, based at the Shangri-La Plaza Mall, offers one-on-one voice, musical instruments (piano and guitar), languages (English and French) and speech classes.

Trumpets summer workshops run April 2-June 2. Call 6362842 or 6354478, or visit http://musicademy-playshop.blogspot.com.


TRUMPETS endorsers Tippy, Reymond, Aria, Christian and Ashley

AUDIE and Sam


ASHLEY and Reymond


"MOVING ON" 4

Rock Drilon's new works

MAG:NET GALLERY PASEO (PASEO Center, Paseo de Roxas cor. Sedeno Street, Makati City) presents "Recent Paintings," by Rock Drilon, until March 31. The exhibit features Drilon's recent paintings.

The two-part show demonstrates what the artist surmises as the interchangeability of painting and drawing, especially in terms of its shared quality of "painterliness" and its intuitive impulse. Drilon considers his drawings in particular as being more intimate as they are composed of sheets torn away from his journals containing also his own written poetry and personal scribblings.

Call 8177895 or e-mail magnetplus@gmail.com.

Banaue Miclat in concert

BACK FROM NEW YORK AFTER A two-year Master of Fine Arts (MFA) degree in Acting from City University of New York's Brooklyn College, Banaue Miclat will hold a concert on April 25, 6 p.m., at the Church of the Risen Lord in UP Diliman.

Her concert for her late sister, the artist, poet, writer and teacher Maningning Miclat, will benefit the Maningning Miclat Art Foundation.

An all-around actress, singer, dancer and performer, Banaue Miclat was honed by topnotch UP professors and directors Antonio Mabesa, Alexander Cortez and José Estrella in dramatic plays which include "Palasyo ni Valentin," "Blood Wedding," "St. Louis Loves Dem Filipinos," "The Trial/Ang Paglilitis," and "Divinas Palabras."

The cities of Tokyo and Hirosaki heard Banaue sing Caccini's "Ave Maria" and Mozart's "Ave verum corpus" when she joined an international cast in a play, "Indian Summer," directed by Koji Hasegawa and sponsored by Japan Foundation in 2002.

She is also remembered as the character Huling in Lav Diaz's film "Ebolusyon ng Pamilyang Pilipino."

While a student in New York, her membership in the Vangeline Theater boosted her talent as a dancer (formerly of Ramon Obusan Folkloric Dance Group), after learning the Japanese Butoh dance and as a lyric soprano in a string of performances including "East Meets West with Philip Glass," "Memoirs of a Geisha," "Tokyo Scope," "C.A.R.O.U.S.E.L," "Bleu, Blanc, Rouge," and "Hanae Mori: A Paris-Tokyo Love Affair."

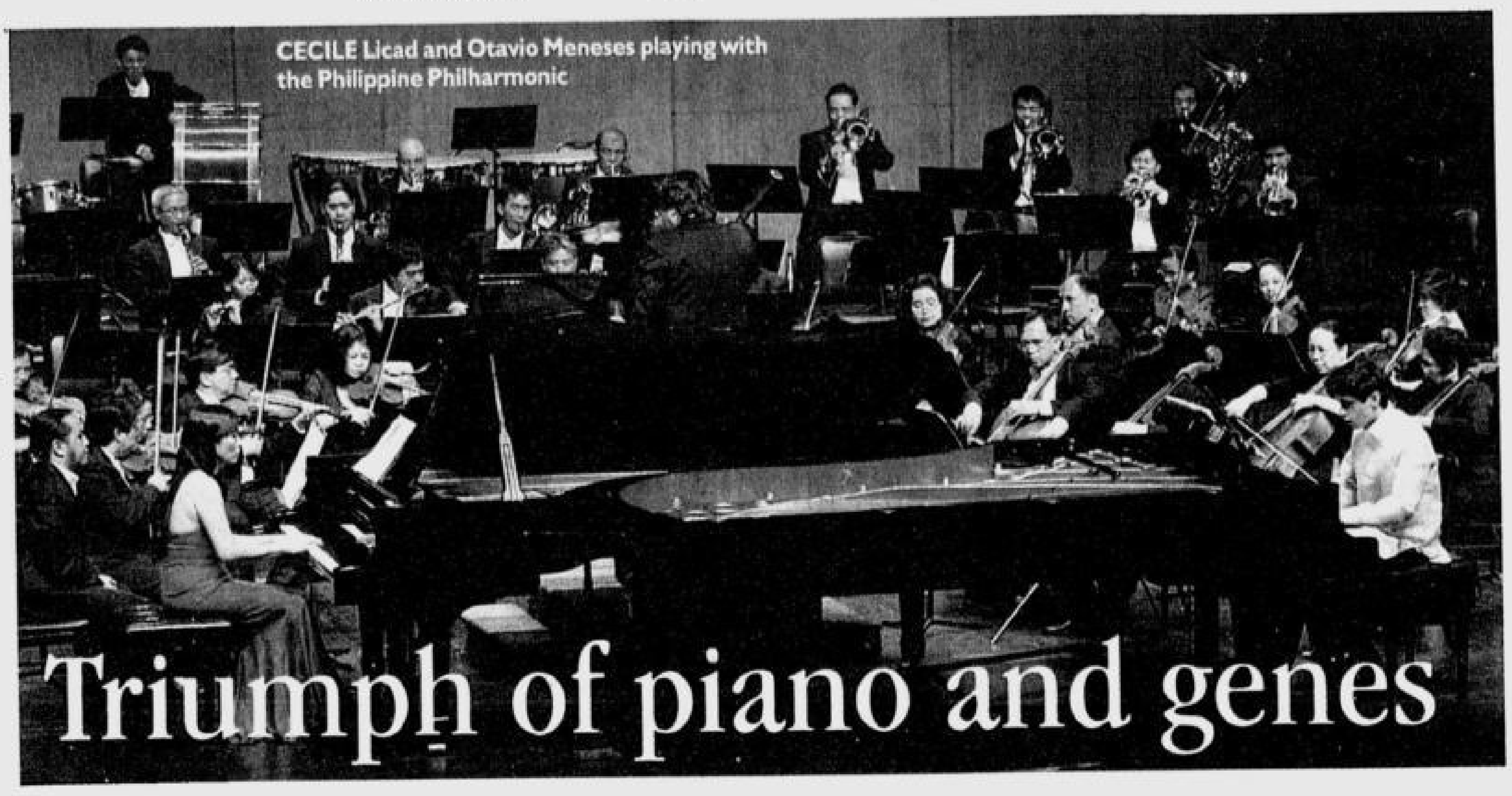
Thanks to her vocal training under Judylee Vivier, and later under Robert A. Carpenter, as well as her Master's classes under F. Murray Abraham, Ruth Maleczech, Agnieszka Holland, Andrew Wade (RSC), Dee Cannon (Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts), and Vernon Morris (Shakespeare), Banaue qualified for a stint at the famed Metropolitan Opera, New York, in productions of "Faust," "La Boheme," "Don Carlo," "I Puritani" and "La Traviata."

Home to raise funds for the Maningning Miclat Art Foundation Inc. (Mmafi), which is holding a trilingual poetry competition this year, deadline of submission of which is April 17. (visit www.maningning.com), Banaue (www.banauemiclat.com) will sing arias from the operas "Turandot," "La Boheme," "La Rondine," and some Filipino *kundimans*. There will be special participation by tenor Dondi Ong, who will sing duets with Banaue.

The concert will highlight a raffle of artworks donated by artists Manny Baldemor, Fred Liongoren, Adi Baens Santos, Eghai Fernandez and Nestor Vinluan, and some new young artists.

Cocktails will be served at the CRL Garden. For ticket reservation priced at P1,000, call 0918-9057311, 8124885 or 8167490; e-mail maningningfoundation@gmail.com, acmiclat2004@yahoo.com, pinktikbalang@yahoo.com.

BANAUE Miclat



CECILE Licad and Otavio Meneses playing with the Philippine Philharmonic

Triumph of piano and genes

SERGEY Kuznetsov

By Pablo A. Tariman
Contributor

THE INQUIRER STORY ABOUT THE mother-and-son concert of Cecile Licad and Otavio Meneses with the Philippine Philharmonic Orchestra the other week resulted in a deluge of calls to the organizers.

In a matter of days, the orchestra, upper and lower boxes and balcony 1 of the Cultural Center of the Philippines were sold out.

For once, a PPO concert season had become a blockbuster. Never mind that Licad and her son were playing outside the Chopin-Beethoven and Tchaikovsky orbit.

Strangely there were two conductors: principal cellist Renato Lucas, who conducted the opening number, "Short Ride in a Fast Machine" by John Adams; and Eugene Castillo, who conducted the suite from "Pelleas and Melisande."

Castillo also worked with Licad in Ravel's Concerto in G Major, a reprise of their first team-up with the now defunct San Miguel Philharmonic.

In the Ravel concerto, the tempo of the orchestra didn't quite match Licad's inner fire, but the rapport remained convivial.

As for Poulenc's Concerto for Two Pianos played for the first time with soloists who happened to be mother and son, the excitement was intense, and here one discovered where the son got his musical genes. One discovered, too, Otavio's cantabile in the encore numbers from Buencamino's "Hibik ng Diwa" to Rachmaninoff's Italian Polka.

A standing ovation followed Licad's rendition of her first encore number, a Kreisler favorite arranged by Rachmaninoff.

On the whole, the mother-and-son team-up was pure joy, and music-lovers now expect a repeat performance by the dream duo.

Russian pianist's concert

After the the Licad-Meneses concert, the next piano event worth looking forward to is the Philippine debut of Russian pianist Sergey Kuznetsov, prizewinner of the Cleveland International Piano Competition (USA); the Calabria Competition (Italy); the Alicia de Larrocha Competition (Spain); and, lately, the Hamamatsu Competition (Japan).

I first heard of this pianist from Anna Leah Sarabia, who had seen a performance of Kuznetsov in Zurich. She said the pianist "is a genius of Chopin" and "should be heard in Manila."

German critics described Kuznetsov as "simply overwhelming" and "with phenomenal flair for expressive nuances."

Swiss critics said he was a real virtuoso of the Russian school, a musician who placed his virtuosity fully at the service of the music.

The Russian prizewinner's program includes Beethoven's Sonata No. 27 in E Minor, Op. 90; Tchaikovsky's Scherzo Humoristic and "Meditation," Op. 72, No. 5; Ravel's Gaspard de la nuit; Scriabin's Sonata No. 3 in F Sharp Minor, Op. 23; and Chopin's Sonata No. 3 in B Minor, Op. 58.

Kuznetsov will perform on May 7, 8 p.m., at Philamlife Theater. The concert is part of the 60th anniversary celebration of the Philamlife Insurance Company.

Kuznetsov will also be heard in Bacolod City on May 8 at the L'Fisher Hotel Ballroom.

For tickets, call 9007023 or 4972971.

Pioneer educator

That was a memorable tribute given by the Adventist University of the Philippines (AUP) in honor of pioneer educator Alfonso Roda.

The concert featured the AUP University Chorus under Heide Cerna and the AUP Chamber Orchestra under Rodney Abriol. Both performed Handel's "Messiah" and Beethoven's Choral Fantasy with Ingrid Sala Santamaria as piano soloist.

PPO season ender

The current PPO season under Eugene Castillo ends April 13 at the CCP Main Theater with the performance of Bruckner's greatest work, the 9th Symphony.

The PPO will also perform "Te Deum" with the Philippine Madrigal Singers, who will later have another concert on April 28 called "A Wonderful World." For tickets, call 4972971.

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Repertory holds workshops

REPERTORY PHILIPPINES IS now accepting enrollees to its annual summer acting workshops, which starts April 10 and will culminate with a showcase recital within the last two weeks of May at Onstage, Greenbelt 1.

All workshops will be held at the Rep office at Karrivin Plaza, 2316 Pasong Tamo Extension. Fee is P6,000.

Classes for children (5-8 years old) and pre-teens (10-12 years old) are from 9-11 a.m. and 11 a.m.-1 p.m. Classes for teens (13-16 years old) are from 9-11 a.m. and 1-3 p.m. Adult classes (18 and up) are from 7-9 p.m. All classes will be from Monday to Friday.

A special workshop to be conducted by London-trained Rep actress Ana Bitong is available for those interested in acting courses for non-musicals. Classes start April 16, 4-7 p.m. Slots are on a first-come, first-served basis. Call 8870710.

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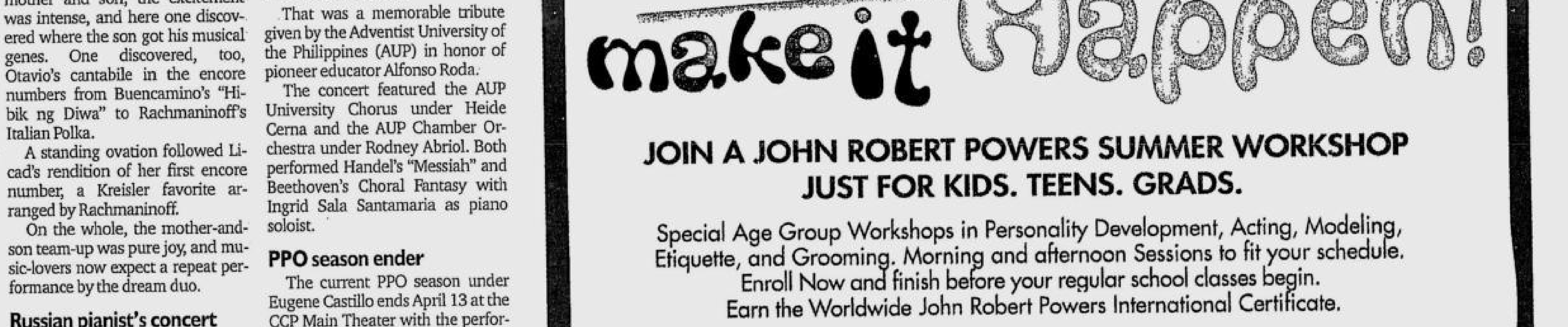

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ILIGAN PRISON DRAMA

Hell on earth

The book by a Nigerian prison chaplain is an impassioned indictment of the miserable conditions prevalent in Philippine jails

Behind Iron Bars
Companion and Compassion in Prison Ministry
Chibuike Ojilere

By Christine Godinez-Ortega
Contributor

LAST WEDNESDAY, A HOSTAGE CRISIS broke out at the Iligan City jail when inmates barricaded themselves with some visitors inside.

They were protesting the refusal of jail authorities to allow their relatives to provide them with rubbing alcohol; apparently they had been using alcohol to clean themselves up because there was no water in the facility.

The incident showed the poor conditions of city and municipal jails nationwide. Ironically, a book by a Nigerian missionary priest published last year had raised concern about the terrible conditions in Iligan prisons and elsewhere.

"Behind Iron Bars: Companion and Compassion in Prison Ministry" (Spiritans Publication, Iligan City, 2006), by Fr. Chibuike Ojilere, CSSP, captures the desperation of inmates in the Iligan City jail in Tipanoy as well as in Lanao del Norte's municipal jails and provincial jails, from 2002 to the present.

The book vividly describes the inhumanity of abusive prison guards; the misery of jail conditions like—hold your breath—three toilets for 412 prisoners with no potable water in most cases; the overcrowding of minors and adults in one cell; and the budget of P25 for three meals a day for each inmate.

What is remarkable about the book is its straightforward narration with undertones of beseeching and pleading for the country to do something ("We must act now!") for the prisoners, in particular, the jailed street children.

At ages 9-14, children end up in jail with adults because, as Ojilere points out: "Faced with no available space to separately detain arrested children, including those suffering from mental disability, law enforcers mindlessly mix up and detain children with adult crime suspects, unafraid of any culpability on their part for their commission of this human-rights violation due to poverty and powerlessness of their children victims and lack of effective grassroots mechanisms providing redress for this inhumanity."

Systemic poverty

Ojilere attempts to understand why people are thrown in jail, by analyzing the crimes of offenders. He points a finger at systemic poverty due to, among others, unemployment and poor environment. He laments, too, the innocent who are doing time simply because their cases have not been heard by the courts for years.

Such complaints against the bureaucracy in the legal system and the callousness and apathy of government officials have been philosophically rendered in the book, which somehow cushions our shock, knowing that we live in relative comfort while others suffer physically every minute they are behind bars.

The far-reaching implications of the "unimaginable" misery and cruelty witnessed by Ojilere during his prison ministry require that Filipinos should think hard of solutions to help eliminate this social malady.

Ojilere's forceful pleas for compassion toward persons jailed for various offenses are interspersed with quotations from the Bible and philosophy, he being a Philosophy major in Nigeria and in his graduate studies in the United States.

Powder keg

At some point, the reader is convinced he holds a powder keg there when he simmers at the miserable jail conditions.

When referring, for example, to the P25 budget for three square meals per inmate, he says: "What a square meal! The food—quantitatively and qualitatively—is horrible. Most often inmates have to eat half-boiled rice without any viand."

At other times, he talks about his own creative ways of helping the inmates. He organized the Volunteers in Prison Service (VIPS); composed of laymen and women, to assist him in his prison ministry. He put up The Lazarus Project for recently released prisoners who are still wrapped in "grave clothes" of anger, despair, loneliness and addiction, to help them return to normal lives.

The next challenge for Ojilere is to expand his research and include case studies of prisoners as a sequel to the present volume, for he has the honesty to face one of Philippine society's sorest spots. This is most admirable of Ojilere, 33, of the Igbo tribe and of the Congregation of the Holy Spirit (Spiritans).

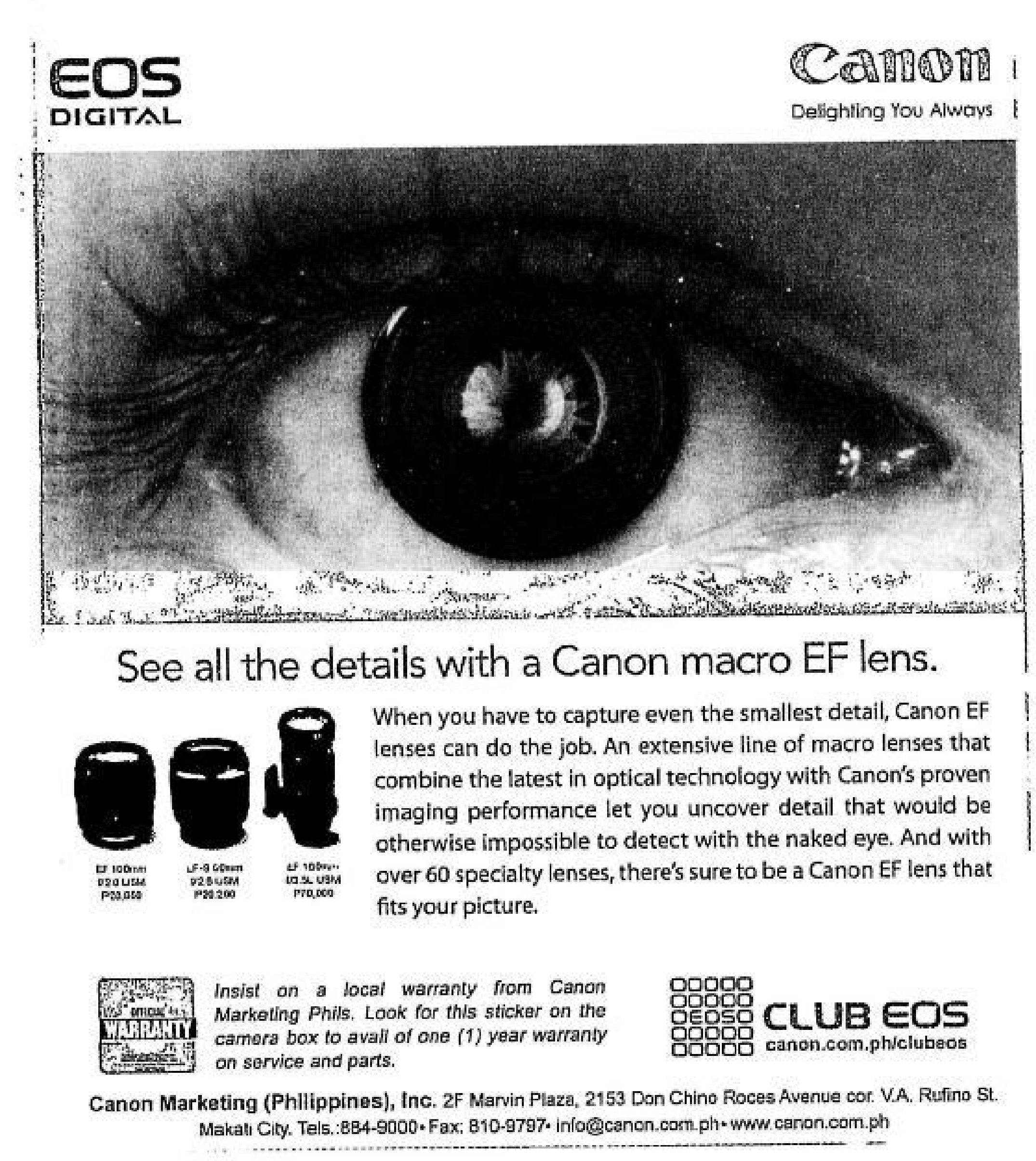
First assignment

Ojilere came to the Philippines six years ago, his first assignment after he was ordained in Nigeria in 2000. Two years after arrival in Iligan, he was appointed prison chaplain by then Bishop Emilio Bataclan.

He has earned a place in the hearts of Iligananons because he speaks four Nigerian languages as well as English, French, Spanish and Italian, and he, too, is fluent in Cebuano and Tagalog.

If this book proves its potential to be a manual on how to evade Philippine prisons at all costs, it should also prove to be one more boost to international relations.

The book is available at the Iligan Catholic Center for Campus Ministry (tel. 2214012) and at the San Miguel Cathedral convent office.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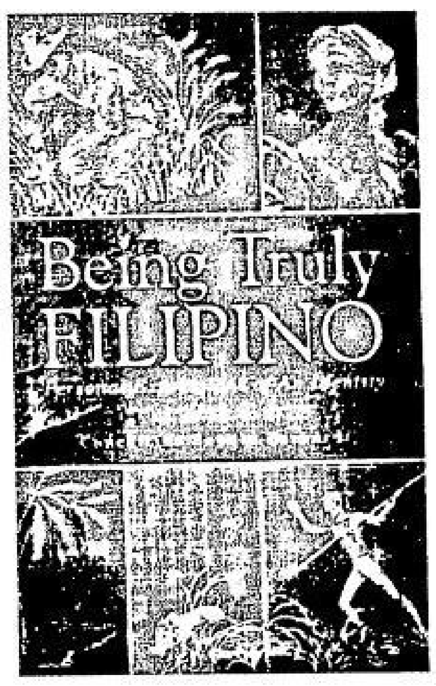
Book by Conchitina Sevilla Bernardo to be launched



CONCHITINA SEVILLA BERNARDO has written a book that details her life as the wife to Philippine ambassador to Spain Joseph "Lani" Bernardo.

For five years now, she has accompanied her husband in his posting in Madrid.

Conchitina speaks of a time that was "magical," a time when she had to be truly Filipino. Hence, the book's title "Being Truly Filipino: Personal Expressions of an Identity."

It is a well-illustrated book, tracing back to colonial times when Spain, the Philippines and the Americas, specifically Mexico, were linked by the galleon trade.

Bernardo says that, long before "globalization" became a catchword, the Philippines was already practicing globalization in the 17th and 18th centuries. In the book are old lithographs and photographs of colonial Manila as well as snippets of history.

Bernardo documents the efforts she and her husband have made to make the Philippine embassy and their residence in Madrid evoke all things Filipino. She also pays tribute to the past ambassadors of the Philippines to Spain.

Noteworthy and beautifully photographed are the dining tables of some of Manila's most distinguished ladies and their favorite Filipino recipes. As the author believed Filipino dishes were delicious but visually unappetizing, she asked her friends to come up with outstanding dining tables and eye-catching food presentations. This segment of the book is most original and interesting.

A fashion segment drawing inspiration from beautiful archival photos found in Spain's museums are translated into modern-day wear by young designers Edwin Tan and Pepsi Herrera.

The many diplomatic affairs are described and the book ends with the official visit of President Macapagal-Arroyo to Spain.

"I am at all times in touch with my Filipino-ness. I want to showcase it, to proclaim it, and to present it in the best possible way," says Bernardo.

Ambeth Ocampo, chair of the National Commission for Culture and Arts, says in his foreword: "One can only wish that this book, being the first of its kind, will not be the last. It is yet another small step toward catching that elusive thing we call Filipino national identity."

"Being Truly Filipino: Personal Expressions of an Identity" will be launched March 28. The book is edited by Glenna Aquino and art-directed by Allen Pertierra. It will be available at PowerBooks and National Book Store branches.

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CATHOLIC motivational author and speaker Bo Sanchez is PowerBooks Filipino Author for March. His bestsellers include "You Can Make Your Life Beautiful" (2000); "Simplify and Live a Good Life" (2001); and "Your Past Does Not Define Your Future" (2004), all available at PowerBooks. He is also publisher of Kerygma magazine.

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Thoughts on the value of education

Graduation: From good endings to new beginnings

For some parents, education is their best gift to their children. You can see parents do everything they can to send their kids to good schools. The only thing they ask of them is do well and graduate.

Some students may take their education for granted only to realize its importance when they are set to face the real world. It has been said many times that graduation is just the beginning, and preparing for the real world should start just when you entered college.

Some inspiring thoughts and words of wisdom help in trying to pursue that dream or when you are about to give up. Here are some quotations from famous and ordinary people that are worth reading and remembering:

Graduation is only a concept. In real life every day you graduate. Graduation is a process that goes on until the last day of your life. If you can grasp that, you'll make a difference.
--Arie Pencovici

In the business world, everyone is paid in two coins: cash and experience. Take the experience first; the cash will come later.
--Harold Geneen

Always be a first-rate version of yourself, instead of a second-rate version of somebody else.
--Judy Garland

Education is what survives when what has been learned has been forgotten.
--B.F. Skinner

Education is an admirable thing, but it is well to remember from time to time that nothing worth knowing can be taught.
--Oscar Wilde

Your families are extremely proud of you. You can't imagine the sense of relief they are experiencing. This would be a most opportune time to ask for money.
--Gary Bolding

An investment in knowledge always pays the best interest.
--Benjamin Franklin

Commencement speeches were invented largely in the belief that outgoing college students should never be released into the world until they have been properly sedated.
--Garry Trudeau

It is clear the future holds great opportunities. It also holds pitfalls. The trick will be to avoid the pitfalls, seize the opportunities, and get back home by six o'clock.
--Woody Allen

'It is indeed ironic that we spend our school days yearning to graduate and our remaining days waxing nostalgic about our school days.
--Isabel Waxman

The things taught in schools and colleges are not an education, but the means of education.
--Ralph Waldo Emerson

Try not to become a man of success, but rather try to become a man of value.
--Albert Einstein

Excellence is not a skill. It is an attitude.
--Ralph Marston

The purpose of a liberal education is to make you philosophical enough to accept the fact that you will never make much money.
--Author Unknown

The trouble with learning from experience is that you never graduate.
--Doug Larson

The larger the island of knowledge, the longer the shoreline of wonder.
--Ralph W. Sockman

Life is my college. May I graduate well, and earn some honors.
--Louisa May Alcott

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BEST IN Loving & Teaching
BLUE BAY TUNA
HOT & SPICY
BLUE BAY TUNA
Ganyan magmahal pag Nanay ka.

Thank you, 'Nay.
Ang pagmamahal mo ang nag-inspire sa akin
para pag-aaral ko ay pagbutihin. Kaya sa graduation ko...
syempre, may award ka rin. Idol kita, 'Nay!

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malinamnam, sa halagang abot-kaya.

School life mirrored in teen flicks

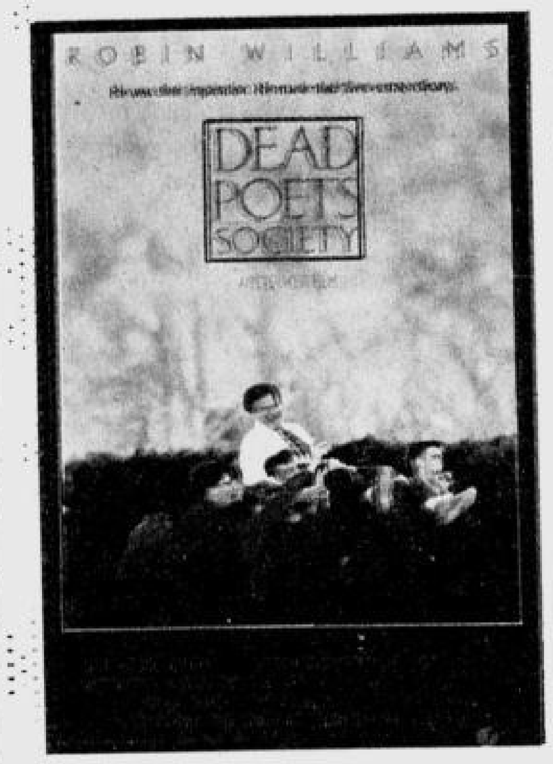
TEEN FLICKS NEED NOT BE ABOUT JUST scary summers, early sex, or the mishaps that happen in school. There are some really good films that tackle students' life struggles and their teachers and people who affect them.

These films proved immortal, well-loved, and memorable. No matter what year they were shown their message spans no time. Here are some really good films that gives out inspirational thoughts and memorable characters.

Dead Poets Society

"Dead Poets Society" is about an English teacher who helps his students understand life and welcome the changes that go with it. "DPS" generated a cult following of poetry and literature.

The story centers around seven boys who attend the prestigious private school Welton Academy. The school for boys lives on four principles: tradition, honor, discipline, and excellence.



Soon, they find themselves resurrecting the long forgotten Dead Poets Society to which one of their teachers was part of. John Keating, played by Robin Williams, is the non-conforming poetry teacher who teaches his students to look at life on a different perspective.

Like many teenagers, the boys go through some turbulent times. They face problems in school, family, and personal life. Keating not only plays his part as a teacher but as a friend and confidante who tries to be a guide to his students.

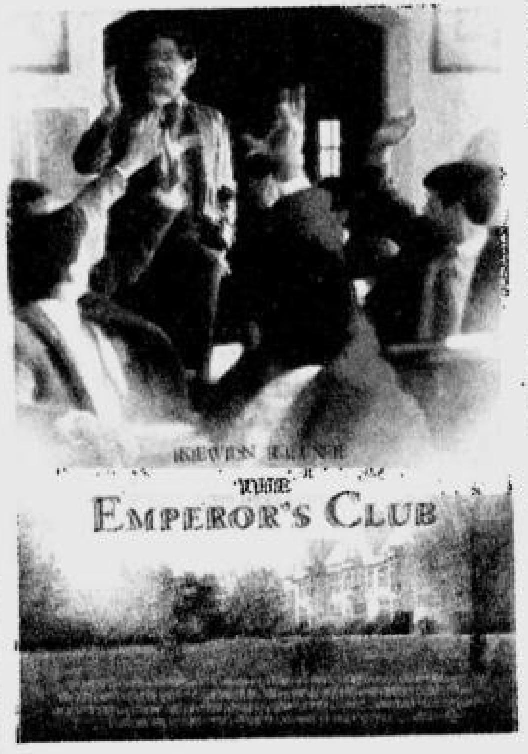
"Dead Poets Society" contains many unforgettable lines that can inspire many people, not only students. It is the movie where we were taught the immortal creed of "carpe diem" or "seize the day."

The Emperor's Club

Again, the setting is about an all-boys' prep school with a teacher-mentor.

William Hundert is a classics teacher who pushes his students to be always better. He always leaves them challenged and yet inspired.

In his class comes Sedgewick Bell, a rebellious son of a senator. Before learning of the root of the child's rebellious attitude, Hundert humiliates Bell knowing that he has no interest in school. He keeps asking him questions he knows he wouldn't be able to answer.



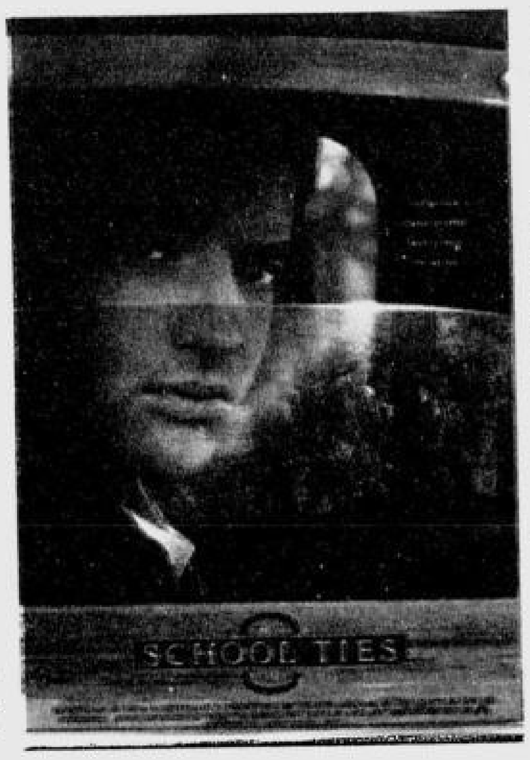
Later on, Hundert manages to become a mentor to Bell and the student does well in school.

With a stroke of a pen, Hundert defines the future of these students.

In his desire to give Bell a chance, he raised the grade of Bell which he does not rightly deserve. The consequence of this is the elimination of a more deserving student to compete in the The Emperor's Club. It is a competition which pits the top three students of the class where they will be asked questions regarding the Classics until only one is left standing.

The guilt on Hundert remains with him even until the boys grew up and shaped their own careers.

In an effort to raise funds to their school which is in danger of being closed, Hundert's students decide to hold a fund-raising through the competition. Hundert eventually vindicates himself, and teaches Bell a lesson he will never forget.



School Ties

After being accepted in a prep school in an athletic scholarship, David Greene finds himself enjoying the fame of being a star-quarterback. And like most quarterbacks, he gets the prettiest girls and the best deals. And like in schools, there will always be someone who gets envy for all the fame you get.

Greene has his share of all of these.

A good boy who went from a small-town public school to a well-known prep school, he suffered in the hands of an envious classmate who took advantage of a situation - a discovery of a secret Greene kept all along.

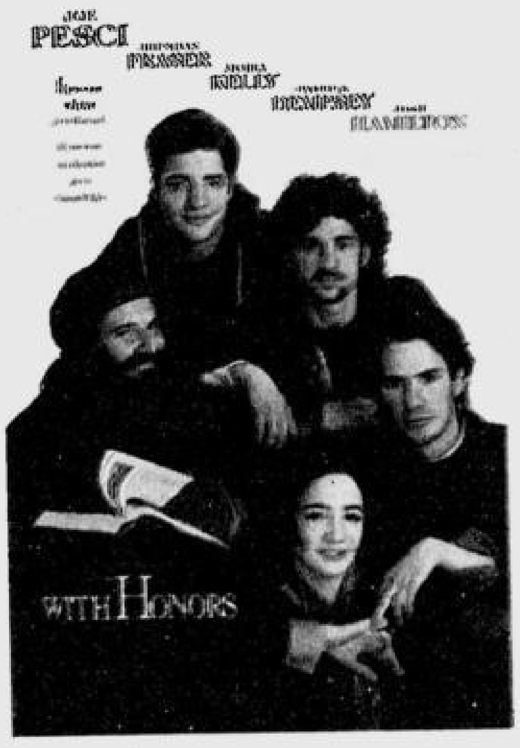
There are still some people so unforgiving upon learning that he is Jewish, something Greene tried to conceal from his classmates. His being Jewish was used against him and the web of lies just keeps going on and on.

In a snap, he lost everything he once enjoyed but he is not to be cowed.

The biggest test for him was when he was accused of cheating in class. Greene, all alone with no one to back him up, is left to defend himself and prove his innocence.

With Honors

Graduating student Montgomery Kessler meets homeless Simon Wilder when he lost his thesis.

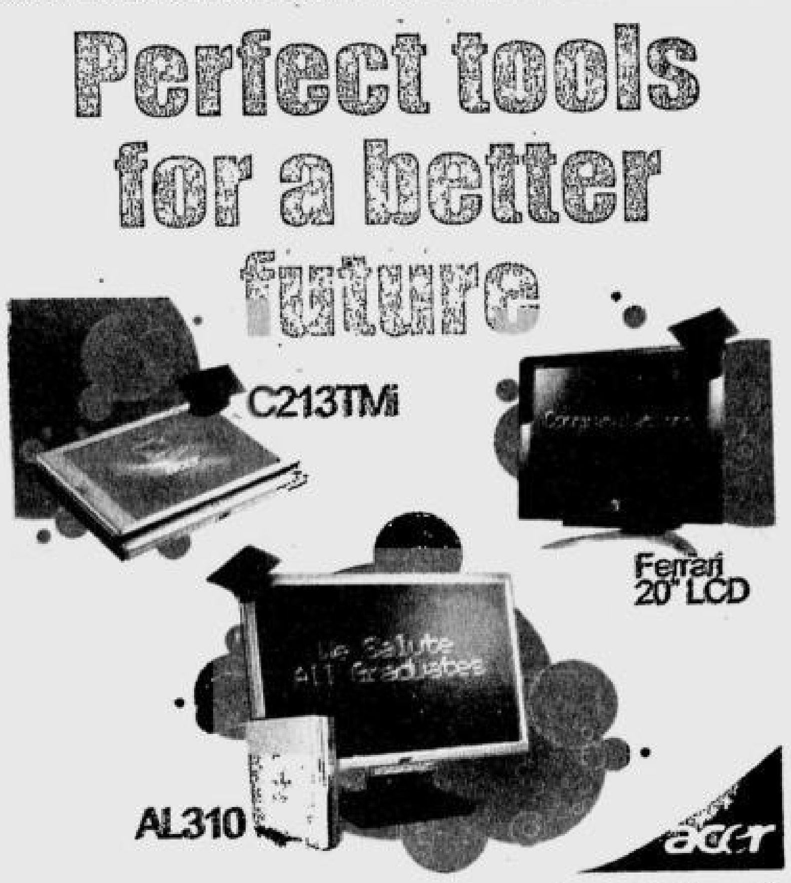


Actually, Kessler dropped the only hard copy of his thesis in the Widener Libray while he was walking along the streets. Desperate, he tried to look for it and finds it in the hands of Wilder. But finding it doesn't mean getting it back. Not to be outwitted, Wilder struck a deal with Kessler in exchange for some favors for every one page of the prized thesis.

The life of Kessler and Wilder together with the former's roomates had its share of ups and downs. Amid the bickerings, they all got along well eventually finding themselves enjoying the company of Wilder.

But good things just never last when Wilder suddenly fell ill. The many twists and turns of the movie can make your heart beat faster with much anticipation. You wouldn't believe how much the young student would do for a friend.

Images taken from www.impawards.com



FOR GRADUATING STUDENTS this year, it may be wise to ponder on what career path to take after graduation; for their parents, it may be wise to aid them as they start on a never-ending quest to build their future. And they need the perfect tools to do so.

It may sound too cliché but it is the truth. Graduation is not the end; it is simply the beginning. Perhaps, it would be good for parents to choose gifts that would help their children accomplish whatever objectives they have set forth in their journey to building for themselves and perhaps their family a better future. Here is where Acer can help.

The future professional may be business-minded, so the Acer Aspire L310 would be a perfect tool. Powered by the latest Intel Core2Duo processor, the Aspire L310 is part of Acer's newest line of what is now called "ultra small form factor" or uSFF PCs that perform at peak levels and yet consumes lesser power consumption, and occupies much lesser space to boot because it is around 1/10 the size of an ordinary PC and is 75 percent lighter.

If the graduate wants to start his or her business in the home, then this Acer workhorse should do the trick. Its sleek, stylish and elegant look lends an air of classiness to any space, be it in a small office, condominium or dormitory. But even if it's smaller and lighter, the L310 packs enough punch for the business-minded graduate.

If he would like a career in sales or marketing, people who are commonly called "telecommuters" nowadays, then an Acer Tablet PC, the C213TMi can do the trick. Imagine him presenting his sales reports or product presentation to a new client armed with an Acer Tablet PC, he'll surely be the talk of the office-and of the potential client as well.

With Intel's Centrino Duo Mobile technology inside, the Core 2 Duo T5500 processor (1.6GHz and 2MB L2 cache), with a Mobile Intel 945 PM chipset, an Intel PRO/Wireless 3945ABG that's ready for either 802.11 a/b/g wireless Internet environment, and a 12.1-inch XGA slate type TFT LCD screen with EMR pen-based input support for relative ease of use, the Acer TravelMate C213TMi is definitely a big boost to the child's career in sales.

Or, if the child's passion is into digital graphic design, top-line suggestion would be a Ferrari F20 LCD to help him see that passion through. With the Ferrari F20 LCD monitor, his visual designs and other creative work would surely come alive in all its crisp and vivid details.

With a 20-inch widescreen viewable area, a 1680 x 1050 @ 75Hz maximum resolution, and an unbelievable contrast ratio of 800:1, the Ferrari F20 LCD monitor is a sure winner. You could already visualize him jumping with pride and joy once he unwraps this one-of-a-kind gift for his graduation.

So, as early as now, depending on the graduate's interest, it would be a masterful stroke for the parent to go to the nearest Acer reseller and pick out which Acer product to buy. Whichever, any Acer product is definitely a sure winner.

Internet recruitment network enhances manpower pool

JOBSDB PHILIPPINES INC, THE Philippine branch of Asia's leading Internet recruitment network, continues to expand its reach in its ongoing search for quality manpower to field as candidates for hiring corporations, by tapping into talent outside Metro Manila, specifically Cebu. It recently established alliances with leading Cebuano educational institutions such as the University of Cebu and the Cebu Normal University.

"Companies are becoming increasingly competitive," JobsDB Phils Inc country manager Jayjay Viray elaborates on this strategy, "They want qualified, dedicated working people who can contribute to and make a difference in their organizations, and they are becoming more and more open to candidates outside Metro Manila."

Recruiting managers are also becoming increasingly selective about the candidates they choose, and many prefer to look at several alternatives during the screening process before arriving at their final choice. JobsDB Philippines (www.jobsdb.com.ph) offers a database composed of the resumes and registered memberships of 700,000 skilled workers, white-collar professionals looking for better opportunities, and unemployed graduates. To enhance its talent pool, it participates or conducts job fairs at an average of twice a month in various places such as schools, barangay halls sponsored by local government units, and malls in partnership with private organizations.

Resumes collected in these job fairs are deposited into the JobsDB database and can easily be accessed by recruiting companies. JobsDB members can also become part of its international network which has branches in 12 countries including Hong Kong, China, Australia, Singapore, Malaysia, India, Indonesia, and Thailand.

"Our job fairs cover the entire scale," says Viray, "We have the small ones that take place in covered courts or school campuses that draw in about 2,000 people. Our major career fairs attract about 10,000-15,000. Sometimes, we are just asked to participate in job fairs that the school or the LGU organizes; in other instances, we take the lead in the organization and logistics."

Though many of the job fairs take place in Metro Manila, invitations have sprung from Davao, Cagayan de Oro, Pangasinan, Ilocos Norte, and Cebu, just to name a few.

Last year, JobsDB's job fair in Cebu, in partnership with Microsoft Philippines, offered IT professionals and graduates working in the provincial city job opportunities based in Metro Manila and other regions.

Viray explains the company's focus on Cebu, "We recognize that Cebu is an immense source of quality candidates given the high standards of its education and its booming industries. Not only is Cebu home to many industry giants, but it also encourages the growth of homegrown brands that fuel our economy and nurture Filipino talent. Cebuano ingenuity has made its furniture-making sector a powerhouse, and their ICT sector is positioning itself as a hub of investment, software, and e-services in Southeast Asia."

Cebu's nine large universities and a dozen other educational institutions specializing in various fields ensure that many industries are covered such as medicine, engineering, maritime, nursing, law, IT, etc.

The University of Cebu (UC), which claims that it has become the nesting ground of future IT practitioners, has seen many of its graduates employed not only in Philippine multi-national companies, but in countries like Singapore and Malaysia; one alumnus is working at Pixar, the leading animation firm that has churned out landmark cutting-edge films like "The Incredibles" and "Toy Story."

The Cebu Normal University (CNU), which specializes in education, points to an extremely high passing rate for its students taking the licensure board exams.

Viray says that employers based in Metro Manila and other provincial cities will now have greater opportunities to screen and hire the graduates of these two universities. "Philippine schools are always in need of good educators, and IT companies here and overseas are always looking for skilled people. This partnership creates a bridge wherein the cream of the Cebu crop and the most competitive Philippine employers can find each other."

Both UC and CNU also see to it that their curricula are in sync with the skills and other competencies required by the companies and that the knowledge and abilities their graduates and alumni bring with them are relevant to their employers.

Maria Salud delos Santos, the Dean of UC's College of Information and Computer Science, elaborates on how close ties established with employers guarantee that their students are always updated on current technological trends, "We talk to the industries after each qualifying exam and ask for feedback. They tell us that our students are really good in technology and application."

Meanwhile, CNU, which has fielded professors and teachers to universities in Manila and Mindanao, creates linkages with companies such as Microsoft. Says Filomena Tongco-Dayagbil, CNU's dean of the College of Teacher Education, "They provide us training - we allow our students to be trained by them on how to use ICT in education for a very minimal cost."

Through JobsDB, the students will be "more marketable to the corporate sector." According to Dr. Esther Velasquez, University president of CNU and one of the accreditors for the different state colleges and universities, "the partnership will help our students to be the best employees in their own fields. Through JobsDB, our students will be accessed not just by local companies here but also abroad. So that's something for our students to look forward to after their graduation."

JobsDB Philippines is an online career site that posts an average of 3,000 jobs a day that can be accessed at any given time, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The free registration allows members to see the available opportunities in a huge range of industries from IT, engineering, call center and service, marketing, advertising, banking, finance to technical-vocational. With Internet access, they can fill out their online resumes, surf for jobs, and apply online.

Ma. Jesusa Viray, country manager, JobsDB Philippines Inc.

99th PNU Commencement Exercises set

WITH THE THEME "EDUCATING With a Worldview: Key to a Sustainable Future," the Philippine Normal University (PNU) is set to let go its 1,700 graduates this 2007 on March 28, 4 p.m., University Quadrangle as it holds the 99th Commencement Exercises for the PNU main campus in Manila. According to university registrar professor Noemi B. Zulueta, there are 150 graduates in PhD/Ed and Master of Arts in Education program and Graduate Certificates and 1,600 in the BSE and BEEd programs in the undergraduate level Wilfred V. Espulgar, Bachelor of Science Physics for Teachers (BSPT) is the number one magna cum laude and leads the 249 students graduating with honors (cum laude). To inspire and challenge the new graduates is Hon. Antonio Eduardo B. Nachura, newly appointed Associate Justice of the Supreme Court, while the Baccalaureate speaker is Dr. Jose J. Ventilacion, president, New Era University. The Recognition Day program speaker is University of the Philippines College of Education professor Dr. Marietta R. Otera (PNC Class '63 Cum Laude). Guest speaker in the elementary and high school level (Center for Teaching and Learning) is lawyer John Rex Laudiangco. Graduation rites will be presided by Commission on Higher Education (Ched) commissioner and chair of the PNU Board of Regents Dr. Nenalyn P. Defensor while PNU president lawyer Lutgardo B. Barbo will confer the degrees. The new graduates will be inducted into the PNU Alumni Association by Dr. Teresita Domalanta, PNU Alumni Association president and DepEd NCR regional director. The overall chair for this year's graduation activities is the dean of the College of Science Dr. Lolita M. Salmorin.

Häagen-Dazs, Globe Telecoms to class of 2007: You're the best graduate!

THIS YEAR'S BATCH OF GRADUATES has much to look forward to.

After years of hard work, from elementary to high school and now with their college days about to be behind them, the final rites before they join the "real world" takes place in campuses all over the country.

What better way to celebrate than to cap the celebratory dinners and lunches with a trip to Häagen-Dazs?

The world's favorite premium ice cream is treating Filipino graduates to its "You're the Best Graduate!" promotion from March 9 to April 3, this year. During this period, any three grads can partake of this special Häagen-Dazs creations such as "Sweet Success," for only P450+ (dine-in) and 299+ (take out), "Chocolate Pleasures" or their "Strawberry Happiness" for only P299+.

Beyond its great taste, there's something more. Graduates who share the delight will get a chance to win 2 units of Nokia N91 and 1 unit of Nokia N80 cellular phones, from Globe Telecom.

Families of 2007 graduates can also join in the fun by purchasing a 500 gram Grand Finale cake for P900, entitling them to one raffle coupon.

"This graduation promotion is our gift to all graduates and their families for their hard work and dedication over the years," said Lelet Acosta, operations manager of Mac-Co Holdings, the group that brought Häagen-Dazs Ice Cream and Max Brenner Chocolate Bar to the Philippines. "We encourage our graduates to join, have fun and win," she added.

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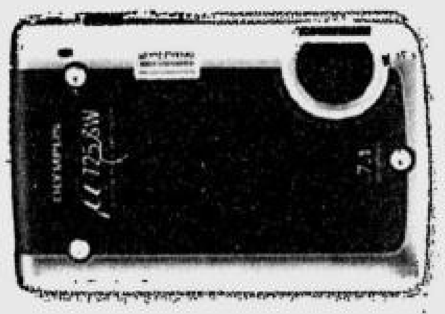
Joining is easy. For every purchase of "Sweet Success," "Chocolate Pleasures" and "Strawberry Happiness creations," or a minimum of 500gms Grand Finale Ice cream cake, a customer is entitled to 1 raffle coupon. Coupons will be drawn on April 27th by Häagen-Dazs and Globe Telecom representatives. Lucky winners will be announced on May 21st.

> A graduation ceremony
> is an event where the
> commencement
> speaker tells
> thousands
> of students dressed in
> identical caps
> and gowns
> that 'individuality'
> is the key to success.
> *- Robert Orben*

A-grade gifts for a great student

GRADUATION DAY - NO ONE CAN BE MORE PROUD THAN the parents. And because your child or children made you the proudest parents on earth, why not give them their just reward for all those nights they burned the midnight oil? Here's a couple of suggestions:

Olympus µ725SW: The survivor of the toughest

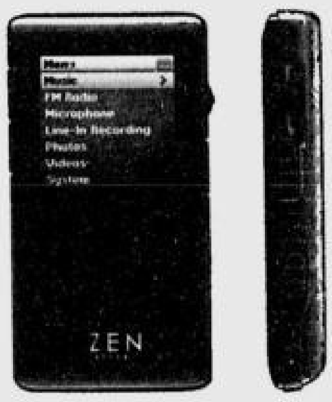


For the graduate who truly is a survivor in his/her own right, one tough camera is the perfect match.

Succeeding the Eisa-Award winning µ720SW, the µ725SW is now waterproof to 5m and shockproof to 1.5m for the ultimate toughness, robustness and versatility. The stylish metal body is available in three striking colours: Titanium Grey, Deep Blue and Cherry Red. Image quality is as good as its tough physique, with a resolution of 7.1 million pixels plus a 3x optical zoom (equivalent to 38-114mm). Has a large 6.4cm LCD and 25 scene modes for trouble-free shooting. And thanks to BrightCapture Technology, great results are possible even in low-light conditions.

No matter if your kid is snorkeling in the sea or mountain biking through the mud you can rest assure that the µ725SW won't let him/her down!

Zen Neeon 2: Your kid's new musicmate



Match your kid's flair for individuality with the new Zen Neeon 2. This musicmate from Creative let's your child be bold, brave, and show everyone who he/she is.

Just as gorgeous as its predecessor, it comes with more power-packed features and personalization options, while maintaining slender dimensions. Personalize the player with exciting new Stik-On themes, and a matching backplate color. View videos and photos in full color on the sharp 1.5" screen, and enjoy up to 20 hours of continuous audio playback. Record songs directly in WMA format from a CD/MD player or anything else with the integrated mic. And of course Creative cares about your child's hearing. Log on to www.creative.com to learn more on how to listen smart.

DLSU-GSB, FEU-IL set admission exams for MBA-Law Dual Degree Program

THE DE LA SALLE UNIVERSITY Graduate School of Business (DLSU-GSB) and the Far Eastern University Institute of Law (FEU-IL) have tied up to offer the country's first post-graduate dual degree program in business and law. The MBA-JD Dual Degree Program is designed for students who intend to earn both a Juris Doctor degree (JD) and a Master of Business Administration (MBA) concurrently.

The admission exam dates are set for April 5, May 10 and 17 at the DLSU RCBC Campus and for April 12 at the DLSU Taft Campus.

Recognizing that the worlds of law and business have become increasingly interdependent, FEU-IL and DLSU-GSB have joined forces to offer a dual degree program in law and management. The dual degree program prepares students to approach problems from the perspectives of both a business executive and a lawyer. This program is designed to provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary to excel in two interrelated disciplines and to understand the interrelationships between them.

The total amount of time required to complete the dual degree program is shorter than the time required to complete both degree independently because pre-approved courses are transferable between the two degrees. When taken jointly, students can complete both degrees in five years versus six if taken independently. This means a savings in both time and tuition fees.

All students will take the MBA entrance examination of the DLSU and the Law essay test of FEU, administered by both law schools. Once admitted to the program, students are required to complete their first year at the law school. Students then pursue both law and business courses toward completion of the final requirements of each program. All classes will be held at DLSU-GSB's RCBC Campus in Makati City.

For more information on the MBA-JD Dual Degree Program, please call 753-4616, 753-4618 or 753-4611 locals 101 or 107. You may also e-mail dean Andres Bautista at abaustista@feu.edu.ph or vice dean Pia Manalastas Tristan Macapanpan at manalastasp@dlsu.edu.ph.tristan.macapanpan@dlsps.edu.ph.

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Your graduate deserves a token of your appreciation for all the hard work. And now that they are embarking on a new path that holds a new promise for them, choose a gift that is as special and unique as they are.

Encourage your graduate to move forward and make a mark. Inspire them to excel. Arm them on their new journey in life with a Parker pen. Available at all bookstores and department stores nationwide.

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Avoid the Trans Fat Trap

Now Entering A Trans Fat Free Zone
Good Health Begins Here

The two letters that seem to dominate every health discussion nowadays are 'TF', which stands for Trans Fat. Product labels at grocery stores are boasting about being "trans fat free", and some restaurants have publicized their efforts to switch to oils that have zero trans fat. But what exactly is it, and why is it so harmful to the health? Most importantly, how do we reduce our intake? Perhaps the FAQ below can shed some important light on this "heavy" issue.

In a nutshell, what are trans fats? While some trans fat (around 21%) naturally appear in milk and meat (and are not harmful), most are formed when hydrogen is added to oil. This process is used to turn liquid oil into the familiar white creamy vegetable shortening and some of the hard margarines. These products are then used, not just at home, but in food manufacturing to produce crackers, cookies, snack foods, and more.

Are all fats bad? Moderate amounts of fat in the diet are considered healthy. Fats are important for growth and maintenance of the body, aid in the absorption of the fat soluble vitamins (A, D, E, and K), add flavor to foods, and fill you up. A healthy diet includes about 20-35% of all your calories from fat. But, the type of fat is important.

What are the different types of fat? Monounsaturated fats are considered the healthiest since they help to lower your serum cholesterol. These are found in foods such as walnuts, almonds, canola oil, avocados, and olive oil. Polyunsaturated fats (including soybean, sunflower oil, and corn oil) can lower cholesterol as well, but some of the effect is coming from a lowering of your "good" (HDL) serum cholesterol. Both saturated fats (found in animal fats, coconut oil, and palm kernel oil) and trans fats should be limited to less than 10% of your total calorie intake.

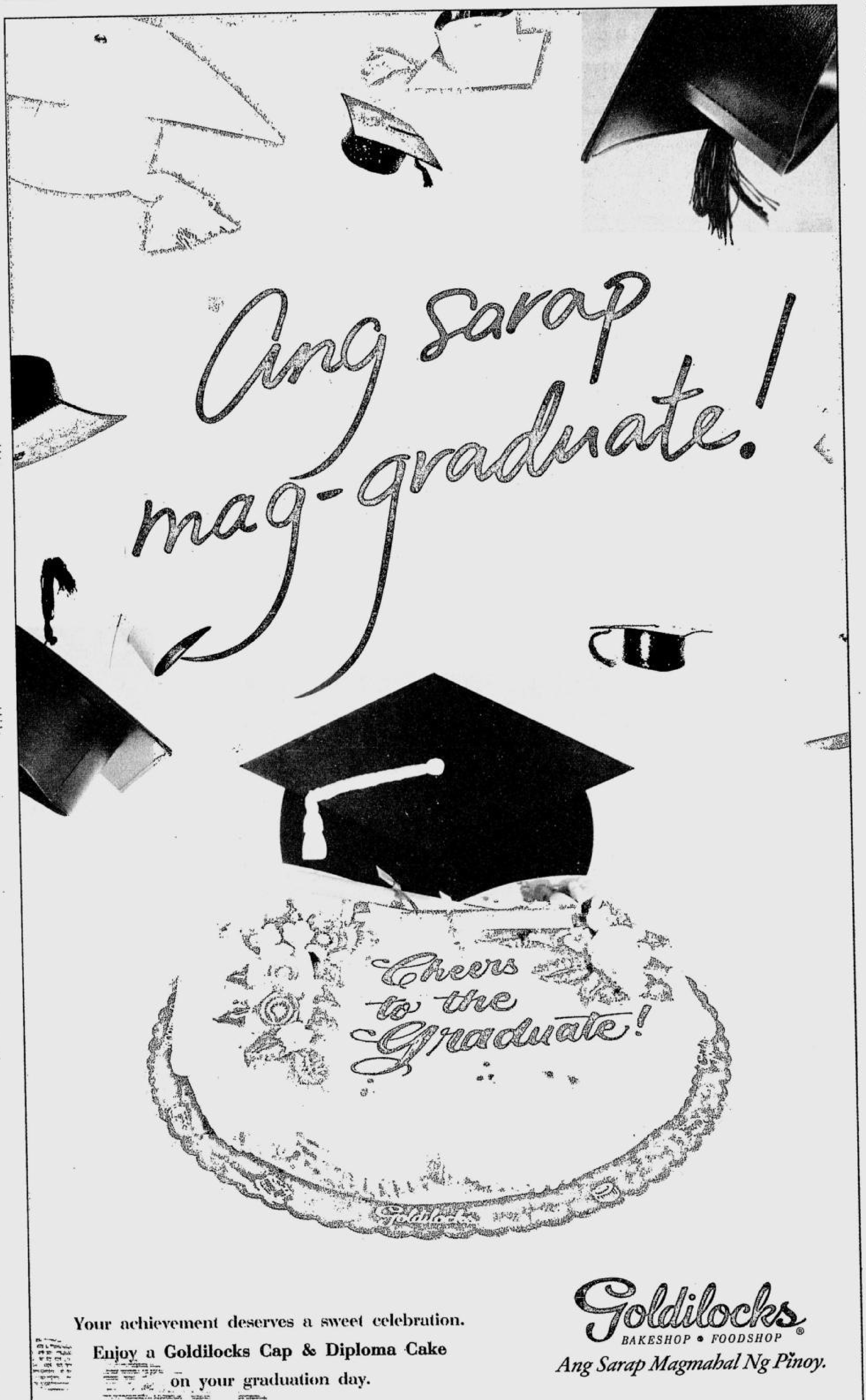
Why are trans fats harmful? Like saturated fats, trans fats have been found to raise your serum cholesterol levels - in fact, a number of studies have determined that trans fats raise cholesterol even MORE than saturated fats.

Scientific reports have confirmed the relationship between trans fat and an increased risk of coronary heart disease. Trans fats clog the arteries and make them more rigid, cause insulin resistance, trigger or contribute to type 2 diabetes and a host of other serious health problems. Metabolic studies have shown that trans fats have adverse effects on blood lipid levels by increasing LDL ("bad") cholesterol while decreasing HDL ("good") cholesterol. This combined effect on the ratio of LDL to HDL cholesterol is double that of saturated fatty acids, since saturated fats only raise LDLs and don't lower HDLs.

How can I start reducing my trans fat intake? Since more than 93% of Filipinos eat bread at least five times a week, it would make good sense to choose a variety that is both delicious and healthy. Apart from its "fresh-from-the-oven" taste, Goldilocks HEALTHtinapay breads are bromate-free, contain no trans fatty acids, and are cholesterol-free. Moreover, they are fortified with Vitamin A, prompting the Department of Health (DOH) to refer to Goldilocks HEALTHtinapay as the "Super Bread".

There are six varieties of HEALTHtinapay to suit every taste and diet: Sandwich Bread, Egg & Milk Bread, Wheaten Bread, Pandesal, Monay, and Raisin Bread. For hearty appetites and families, the three loaf bread varieties are available in 600g bags.

Make a healthy decision and choose Goldilocks HEALTHtinapay as your everyday bread. You will see that great taste and nutritional value can go perfectly hand-in-hand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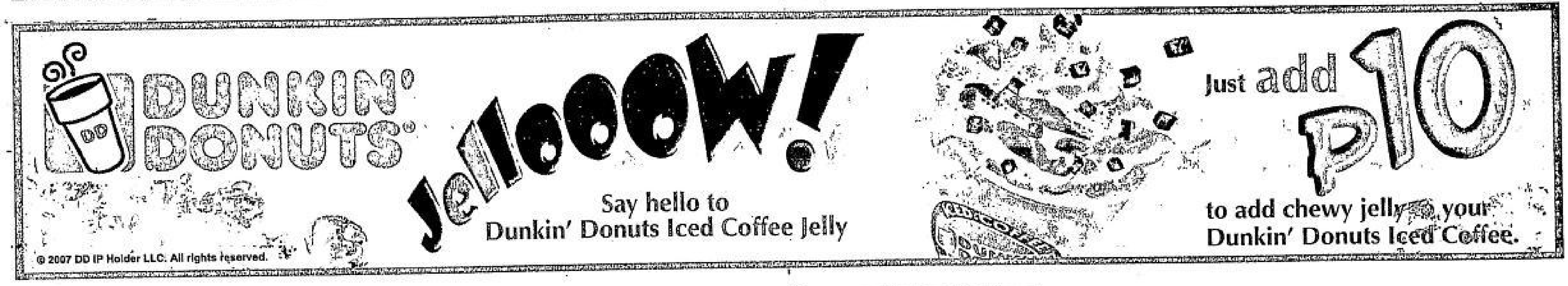

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Kuh on Louie:
Not a saint, but not a murderer

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

KNOWN IN SHOW BIZ CIRcles for being extremely guarded about her personal life, singer Kuh Ledesma has come out to defend former husband Luis Manuel "Louie" Gonzalez, who's been charged with murder and frustrated murder.

Gonzalez was implicated in the March 10 slaying of his stepbrother Federico "Rico" Delgado.

In an interview in her home in Pasay, Ledesma candidly talked about her estranged husband's substance abuse.

She acknowledged that in the circles he moves around in, drug use is prevalent. "In those clubs ... tell me, who in that scene has not touched drugs? But killing someone? That's impossible!"

> 'I'm not covering up for him ... but it would be a mistake if I kept quiet'

KUH Ledesma with husband Louie Gonzalez in 2001

A lot of issues

She stressed: "I will not cover up for him. If my own child were guilty of a heinous crime, I'd give her up to the police."

She clarified that she was compelled to speak up because of the gravity of the accusation. "I am not the type who would tell everyone that my husband is a drug addict—especially since I know that he is struggling with it."

She is not portraying him as a saint either, she insisted. "He has his faults [and] a lot of issues. But he is not a murderer."

She said that, at first, she didn't want to comment because the case had been turned by the police into a "family feud" between the Delgados and Gonzalezes over inheritance.

"It was a private issue, but it would be a big mistake if I were to keep quiet," she said. "Why would I allow someone to be unjustly accused, especially someone I know so well?"

Failed marriage

Ledesma was married to Gonzalez for 16 years and separated from him six years ago.

She pointed out: "In all our years together, he never laid a hand on me. I screamed louder when we fought. That's why our marriage failed—because I'm strong-willed."

She recalled that her husband was manager of their conjugal business, the theater-bar Republic of Malate. "He was in charge of the collection [of money], but he never touched it. I was surprised when the police said that the motive was money."

She volunteered that, although their marriage has yet to be annulled, they are currently applying for a legal separation of properties. "He gave up his claim on our conjugal properties, opting to give his share to our daughter and to my ministry."

Ledesma and Gonzalez have a daughter, Isabella, 22, also a singer and currently co-host on the GMA 7 variety show "SOP."

Asked how her daughter was coping, Ledesma said: "Like me, Isabella is a strong Christian. She knows that her father is not that kind of person. Although this whole thing is being sensationalized [in the media], she remains peaceful."

Another woman

Right after the interview, Isabella sauntered into the Ledesma living room.

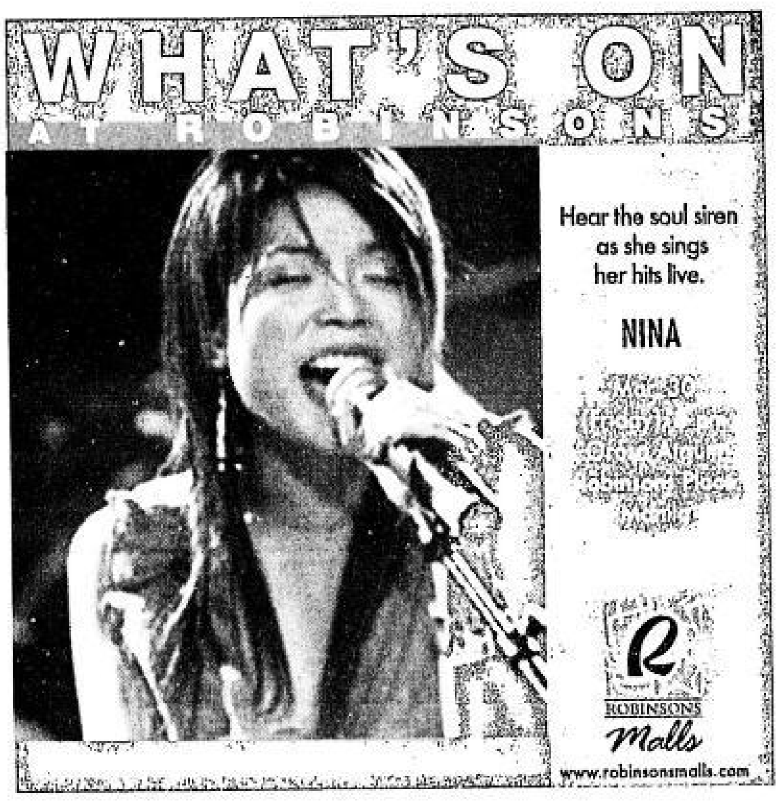
She seemed excited, announcing that she was on her way to dance rehearsals for "SOP."

"We will not allow ourselves to feel downcast or troubled because the Lord is our strength, our refuge. We will not be shaken," Ledesma quipped.

Ledesma said it was her hope that the crisis would change Gonzalez for the better. "Perhaps the Lord allowed this to happen so that Louie would be drawn closer to Him."

Gonzalez is now involved with another woman, but Ledesma said this shouldn't stop her from speaking up in his defense.

"I'm not being a martyr. We're separated, but we're not fighting. We're friends. We're cordial. We just don't get to see each other often because I'm very busy and he has his own life now," she said. "And he's been wrongly accused. There are a lot of good things about Louie. He has a kind heart."



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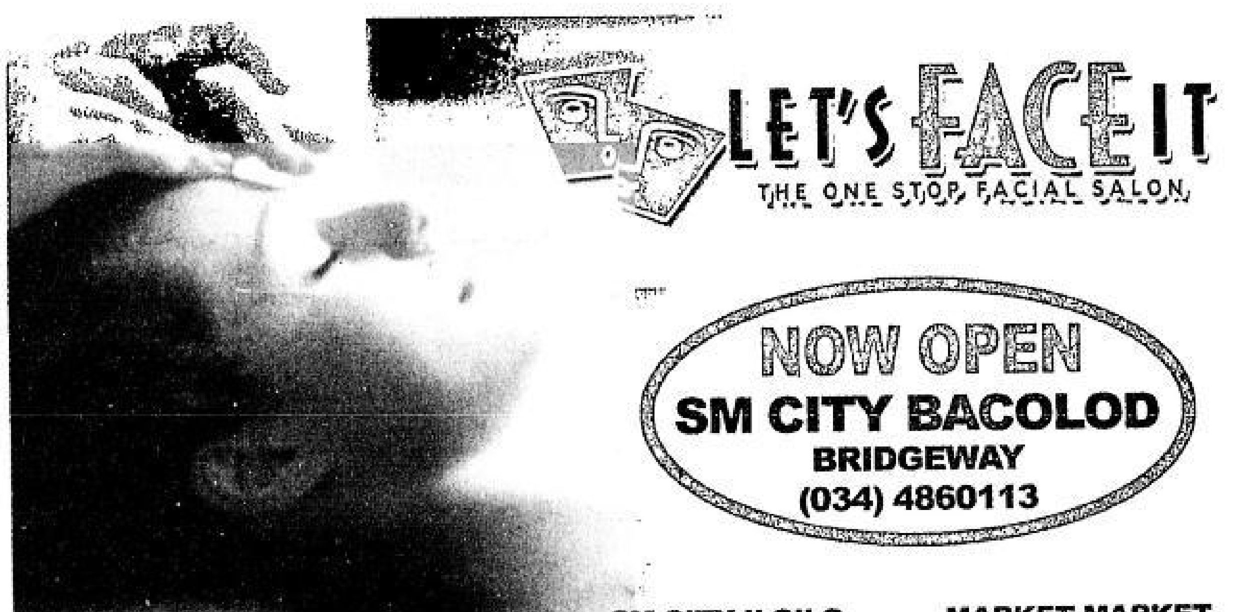

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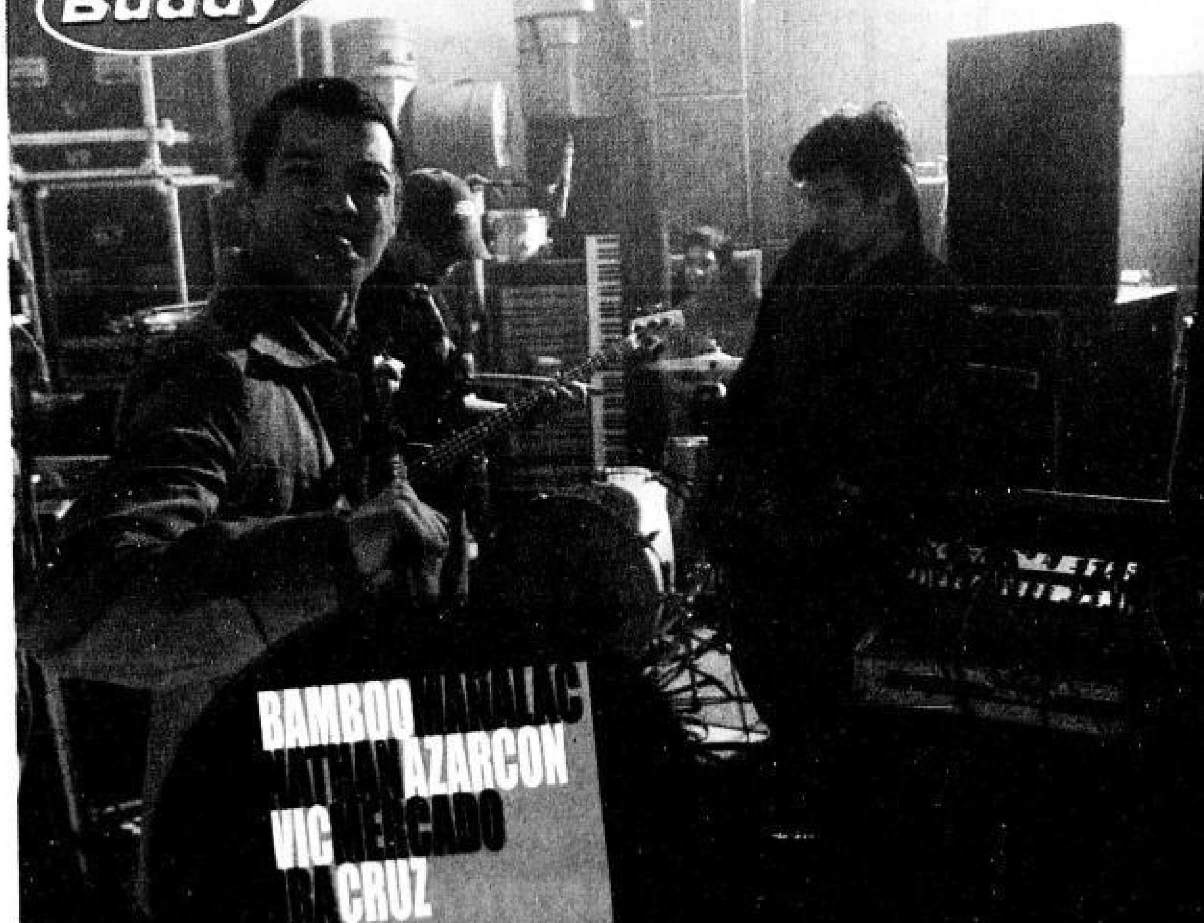

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Araw't Gabi	ARAW
Dear Kuya	DEARKUYA
Hide And Seek	HIDE
Waltz	WALTZ

SONG TITLE	KEYWORD
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Every Breath You Take	EVERY
All At Once	ALLATONCE
Welcome To The Black Parade	WELCOME

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1 PATHFINDER • THX
12:10 2:35 5:00

6 BECAUSE I SAID SO
1:05 3:15 5:25

2 NORBIT
12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50

7 ALPHA DOG
12:20 2:45 5:10 7:35 10:00

3 TURISTAS
1:25 3:30 5:35 7:40 9:50

8 indieSine: ANAK ng TINAPA 1:30 3:05
SA AKING PAGKAGISING 5:20 7:25 9:30

4 300
12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 10:00

9 ZOMBIES
1:25 3:30 5:35

5 PREMONITION
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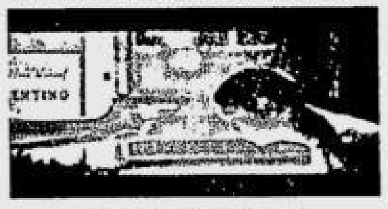

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1 PREMONITION
12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 10:00

2 M.O.N.A.Y. ni SHOOLI
12:20 2:20 4:20 6:20 8:25 10:00

5 ZOMBIES
12:35 2:50 5:05 7:30 10:00

3 NORBIT
12:00 2:00 4:00 6:00 8:00 10:00

6 PATHFINDER 12:30 2:50
300 5:10 7:30 10:00

4 TURISTAS
12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 10:00

7 ALPHA DOG
12:35 2:50 5:05 7:25 10:00

METRO EAST

Ticket Price: P100 682-8193 / 682-8199

1 PREMONITION
1:35 4:05 6:35 9:05

5 PATHFINDER
12:05 2:15 4:25 6:35 9:00

2 300
12:55 3:40 6:25 9:10

6 BECAUSE I SAID SO
12:50 2:50 4:50 6:50 9:00

3 NORBIT
12:50 2:50 4:50 6:50 9:00

7 TURISTAS
11:45 2.05 4:25 6:45 9:05

4 ZOMBIES
12:50 2:50 4:50 6:50 9:00

8 M.O.N.A.Y. ni SHOOLI
1:40 4:10 6:40 9:10

NOVALICHES

Ticket Price: P [illegible] 935-3231 / 935-3229-30

1 PATHFINDER
2 M.O.N.A.Y. ni SHOOLI
3 TURISTAS
4 ZOMBIES
5 300

PIONEER

Ticket Price: P100 687-5378

1 TURISTAS
12:20 2:25 4:30 6:35 8:40

2 PREMONITION
1:10 3:35 6:00 8:25

3 NORBIT
1:40 4:00 6:20 8:40

4 ZOMBIES
12:20 2:25 4:30 6:35 8:40

STA. ROSA

Ticket Price: P80 (049) 837-0907

1 300
2 BECAUSE I SAID SO
3 DEAD PEOPLE 2
4 THE HITCHER
5 M.O.N.A.Y. ni SHOOLI

LIPA

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1 EPIC MOVIE
2 HAPPY HEARTS
3 THE HITCHER
4 M.O.N.A.Y. ni SHOOLI
5 DEAD PEOPLE 2

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1 BRIDGE to TERABITHIA
2 300
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4 PATHFINDER
5 M.O.N.A.Y. ni SHOOLI

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1 IT's A BOY GIRL THING
2 M.O.N.A.Y. ni SHOOLI
3 THE HITCHER
4 THE NUMBER 23

IMUS

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1 THE NUMBER 23
2 300
3 DEAD PEOPLE 2
4 PATHFINDER
5 TURISTAS
6 M.O.N.A.Y. ni SHOOLI

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2 THE HITCHER
3 IT's A BOY GIRL THING
4 M.O.N.A.Y. ni SHOOLI
5 DEAD PEOPLE 2
6 300

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1 IT's A BOY GIRL THING
2 RESERVE
3 BLOOD and CHOCOLATE
4 THE HITCHER
5 M.O.N.A.Y. ni SHOOLI
6 THE FOUNTAIN / 300

ILOILO

Ticket Price: P70.50 (033) 336-8070

1 300
2 M.O.N.A.Y. ni SHOOLI
3 THE NUMBER 23
4 THE GOOD SHEPHERD
5 BLOOD and CHOCOLATE
6 THE FOUNTAIN

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1 (DOLBY) PREMONITION
2 (DOLBY) 300
3 (DOLBY) NORBIT
4 (DOLBY) BECAUSE I SAID SO

· PREMIERE ·

(DOLBY) TURISTAS

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Cinema 2000 Waltermart Makati
Waltermart Center, Chino Roces Ave. cor. Antonio Arnaiz Pio del Pilar, Makati City
Tel 816.4214 / 816.4216

1 300
2 PREMONITION
3 NORBIT
4 TURISTAS

starmall

EDSA-SHAW

(Mandaluyong) tel. 7266150

3 PREMONITION
4 (DOLBY DIGITAL EX) MONAY NI SHOLI
5 RESRVED

metropolis star cinema

www.clickthecity.com.ph
(ALABANG) tel. 8504285, 5433994

1 MONAY NI SHOOLI
2 PATHFINDER
3 TURISTAS
4 300

THEATRES

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Filinvest FESTIVAL CINEMA

(Muntinlupa) tel 850.3571 or 72

1 (DDS) ZOMBIES
2 (SDDS) APHA DOG
3 (DTS) TURISTAS
4 (GOLD DTS) PATHFINDER
5 (GOLD DOLBY) PREMONITION
6 (GOLD SDDS) 300
7 (GOLD DOLBY) NORBIT
8 BECAUSE I SAID SO
9 MONAY NI SHOOLI
10 HAPPY HEARTS

Blue Wave MARIKINA

Sumulong Highway cor. Mayor Gil Fernando Street, Sto. Niño, Marikina City tel. 9341927

1 (DOLBY) 300
2 (DOLBY) TURISTAS
3 (DOLBY) PREMONITION
PACQUIAO VS' SOLIS * APRIL 15, 2007

SUPER CINERAMA

Isetann Cinerama Complex Recto tel 7334228

1 (DOLBY) PATHFINDER
2 TURISTAS
3 MONAY NI SHOLI
4 300
5 PREMONITION

MARKETPLACE

Mandaluyong
tel 533.3851 / 533.3856

1 MONAY NI SHOOLI
2 PATHFINDER
3 YOU GOT ME
4 ASK THE DUSK

Masagana CINEMA 2000

(Pasay) tel 833.3290 / 833.3274

1 MONAY NI SHOOLI
2 ZOMBIES
3 ALPHA DOG

Center Mall Cinema

Baguio Center Mall, Magsaysay Avenue (Baguio City) tel (074)- (4449346)

1 300
2 MUSIC & LYRICS

Jade Cinema

(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.5001 to 03

1 (DOLBY EX) NUMBER 23
2 MONAY NI SHOOLI
3 (DTS EX) IT'S A BOY GIRL THING
4 HAPPY HEARTS

Centre Plaza Cinema

(Balanga, Bataan) tel (047) 237.7007

1 HAPPY HEARTS
2 BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA

EASTWOOD CINEMAS

(Eastwood City Walk 2, Eastwood City E. Rodriguez Jr. Ave (C-5) Quezon City) tel 687.6963 or 72

1 (DOLBY) PREMONITION
2 (DOLBY) 300
3 (DOLBY) NORBIT
4 (DOLBY) TURISTAS

CINEMA 2000

Movie Theatres of the New Millenium

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7383

1 HAPPY HEARTS
2 (DTS) DEAD PEOPLE-2
3 (DOLBY) 300
4

Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall
(Biñan) tel. (049) 4111146

1 RESERVED
2 (DOLBY) RESERVED
3 (DTS) RESERVED
4 RESERVED

Cinema 2000 Cinemagix
(Urdaneta) tel(075) 568.6771

1 PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS
2 HAPPY HEARTS
3 (DOLBY) THE HITCHER

Cinema 2000 Metrotown
(Tarlac) tel (045) 982.1729

1 HAPPY HEARTS
2 NUMBER 23
3 (DOLBY) GHOST RIDER
4 (DTS) PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Plaridel) tel (044) 795.3320

1 300
2 HAPPY HEARTS
3 (DOLBY) FLUSHED AWAY

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Gapan) tel. (044) 4867736

1 DEAD PEOPLE - 2
2 HAPPY HEARTS

Lianas Cinema

(Pasig) tel 640.4748

1 MONAY NI SHOOLI
2 PEEP SHOW

Lianas Cinema

(Alabang) tel 850.1276

1 (DOLBY) THE HITCHER
2 SHE WALK BY NIGHT
3 NAGBABAGANG LANGIT
4 (DTS) MONAY NI SHOLI

Lianas MovieCity

(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202

1 (DOLBY) DEAD PEOPLE-2
2 HUNGER FOR LOVE
3 (DTS) MONAY NI SHOLI
4 FIRST TIME
5 SHAOLIN VS' EVIL DEAD

Fiesta World Mall

(Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790

1 MONAY NI SHOOLI
2 DEAD PEOPLE-2
3 HAPPY HEARTS
4 EPIC MOVIE

Berma Cinema

(Baclaran) tel 879.2030 / 879.2029

1 MONAY NI SHOLI
2 OBSESSION

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EASTWOOD CINEMAS

DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND-EX

Eastwood City Walk 2, Eastwood City
E. Rodriguez Jr. Ave. (C-5) Quezon City

To receive Eastwood City Events, Promos and Cinema schedule just text **eastwood** and send to **2948** for Globe, Smart & Sun Cellular subscribers

For inquiries, call
687-6963
GUARANTEED SEATS

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1 **PREMONITION**
1:05, 3:35, 6:05, 8:35, 11:00
PG-13

2 **300**
2:45, 5:35, 8:25, 11:10
R-13

3 **NORBIT**
1:20, 3:45, 6:10, 8:35, 11:00
PG-13

4 **TURISTAS**
1:40, 4:00, 6:20, 8:40
R-13

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GREENHILLS

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NOW SHOWING

CINEMA 1 **TURISTAS**
10:30 , 12:50 , 3:10
5:30 , 7:50 , 10:10
R-13

CINEMA 2 **ALPHA DOG**
11:45 , 2:25 , 5:05
7:45 , 10:30
R-13

DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND-EX

PROMENADE

GREENHILLS

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NOW SHOWING

CINEMA 3 **PREMONITION**
11:45 , 2:25 , 5:05
7:45 , 10:30
PG-13

CINEMA 4 **300**
11:00 , 1:45 , 4:30
7:15 , 10:00
R-13

CINEMA 5 **NORBIT**
10:20 , 12:10,2:45
5:20 , 7:55 , 10:30
PG-13

TICKET PRICES & SCREENING TIME SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE. FOR CINEMA INQUIRIES, CALL: 722 4496.

MUSIC MUSEUM

March 23, 2007	SITTI ... IN LOVE	8:30 PM
March 30 , 2007	"TARANG" PILITA C., SEC. JOEY LINA, SEC. ANGIE REYES, CHAIRMAN BAYANI F.	8:30 PM
APRIL 13,14 & 20,21, 2007	ROCK THE VOTE	8:00 PM
May 4 , 2007	HALE	8:00 PM

TEATRINO
PROMENADE GREENHILLS

EVERY MONDAY	DANCE NIGHT	7:00 PM
March 22 & 29 , 2007	RAYMUND LAUCHENGCO	8:30 PM

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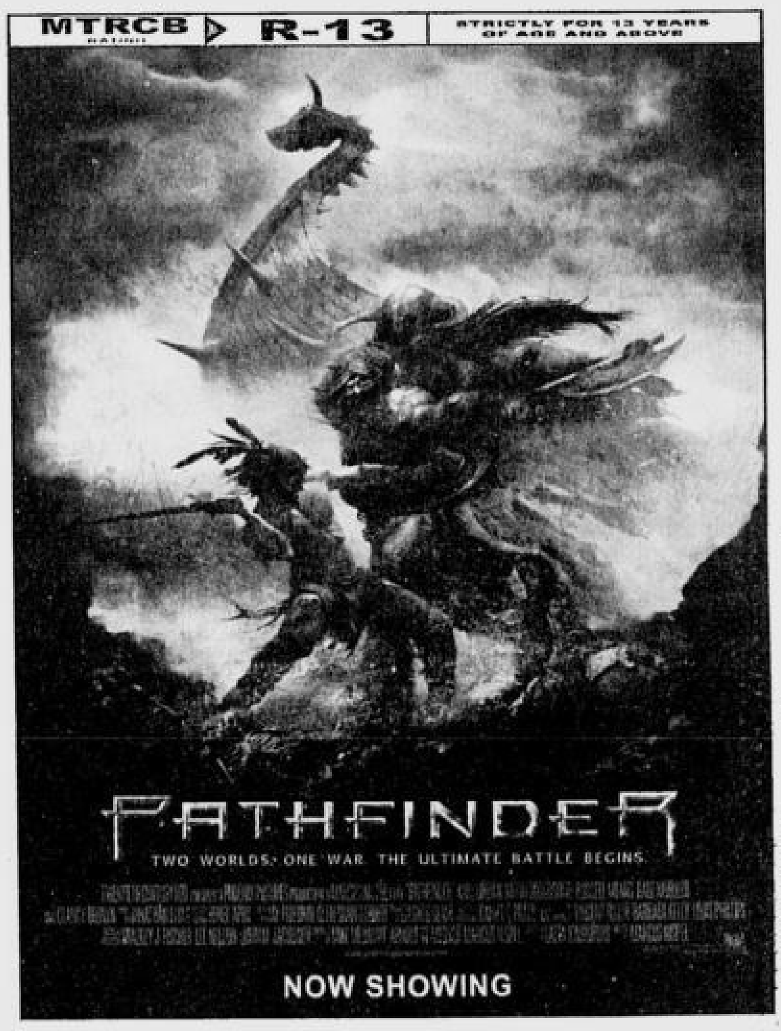

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SANDRA BULLOCK

PREMONITION

Kinky at first, then gruesome

By Oliver M. Pulumbarit
Contributor

REVIEW

EXHAUSTING AND REDUNDANT, THE vacation-gone-wrong thriller "Turistas" lures with tempting images of paradise and then transforms into a hellish trek that doesn't show anything new.

Like "Hostel" and "The Hills Have Eyes," "Turistas" exhibits a sickening fascination for shocking, gruesome violence, although it's a few notches below those torture-happy flicks in terms of horrific death scenes. Still, like those films and "Wolf Creek," too, it's about people on vacation who run into the most unlikely monsters.

Checklist

"Turistas," directed by John Stockwell ("Into the Blue," "Crazy/Beautiful"), starts by giving a precognitive taste of things to come. So it declares early on that it's not going to be a happy, stress-free escape to some island getaway.

This is followed by the introduction of vacationing young men and women who meet after a near-tragic road mishap on some Brazilian cliff. What it is, is a checklist. Just who among these six sexy, spunky adventurers will bite the dust before the end credits roll?

It's mostly a slasher flick that starts as a disorganized travelogue, with some nubile, unwary hotties as tour guides. There's Melissa George as the corn-rowed Pru, a bilingual traveler. She's befriended by siblings Alex and Bea (Josh Duhamel and Olivia Wilde), and their friend Amy (Beau Garrett). They're joined shortly by a British Beavis and Butthead-like duo, backpackers Finn and Liam (Desmond Askew, from "Go," and Max Brown). Together, they discover a beach bar in no time, where they end up partying like mad, some of them mingling (in different ways) with the locals.

Short-lived

Their pleasure is short-lived, not surprisingly. They get drugged, wake up on the beach, and discover that all their belongings had been stolen. Desperate, barefoot, some of them scantily clad, the vacationers look for a police station ... in vain. Kiko (Agles Steib), a local guy they befriended at the beach, leads them away from the town and into a house in the wilderness. They don't smell the trap until, ho-hum, it's way too late.

For the movie's preview screening, some graphic images were cut out. The villain's rationale for his transgressions, his speech that supposedly declares his nobility, is similarly shortened as a result. You get the gist of it, but you wonder about its entirety. After all, not all bad guys in horror flicks explain themselves.

While visually opulent when it comes to scenery that involves kinetic underwater action and glam, the movie is at times so poorly lit, you have to guess what is happening. It gets intense, but only briefly.

"TURISTAS"

POWER PLANT
CINEMA
Rockwell Center, Makati City ☎ Tel. No: 8981440-41
DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND•EX

TURISTAS **R13** 1:45,3:55,6:05,8:15	**PREMONITION** **PG13** 1:10,3:30,5:50, 8:10,10:30	**NORBIT** **PG13** 1:45,3:55,6:05, 8:15,10:25
300 **R13** 12:30,3:00,5:30, 8:00,10:30	**ALPHA DOG** **R13** 1:50,4:00,6:10,8:20	**DREAMGIRLS** **PG13** 12:40 **BECAUSE I SAID SO** **PG13** 3:20

MOVIES AND SCREENING SCHEDULES SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE. FOR VERIFICATION CALL 898-1440/41

SHANG CINEPLEX

① PREMONITION
MTRCB PG-13
2:30, 5:00, 7:30, 10:00

② 300
MTRCB: R-13
1:30, 4:20, 7:10, 10:00

③ NORBIT
MTRCB PG-13
2:45, 5:10, 7:35, 10:00

④ BECAUSE I SAID SO
MTRCB PG-13
1:20, 3:30, 5:40, 7:50, 10:00

PREMIERE THEATRE
TURISTAS MTRCB R-13
3:00, 5:20, 7:40, 10:00

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Shangri-La Plaza

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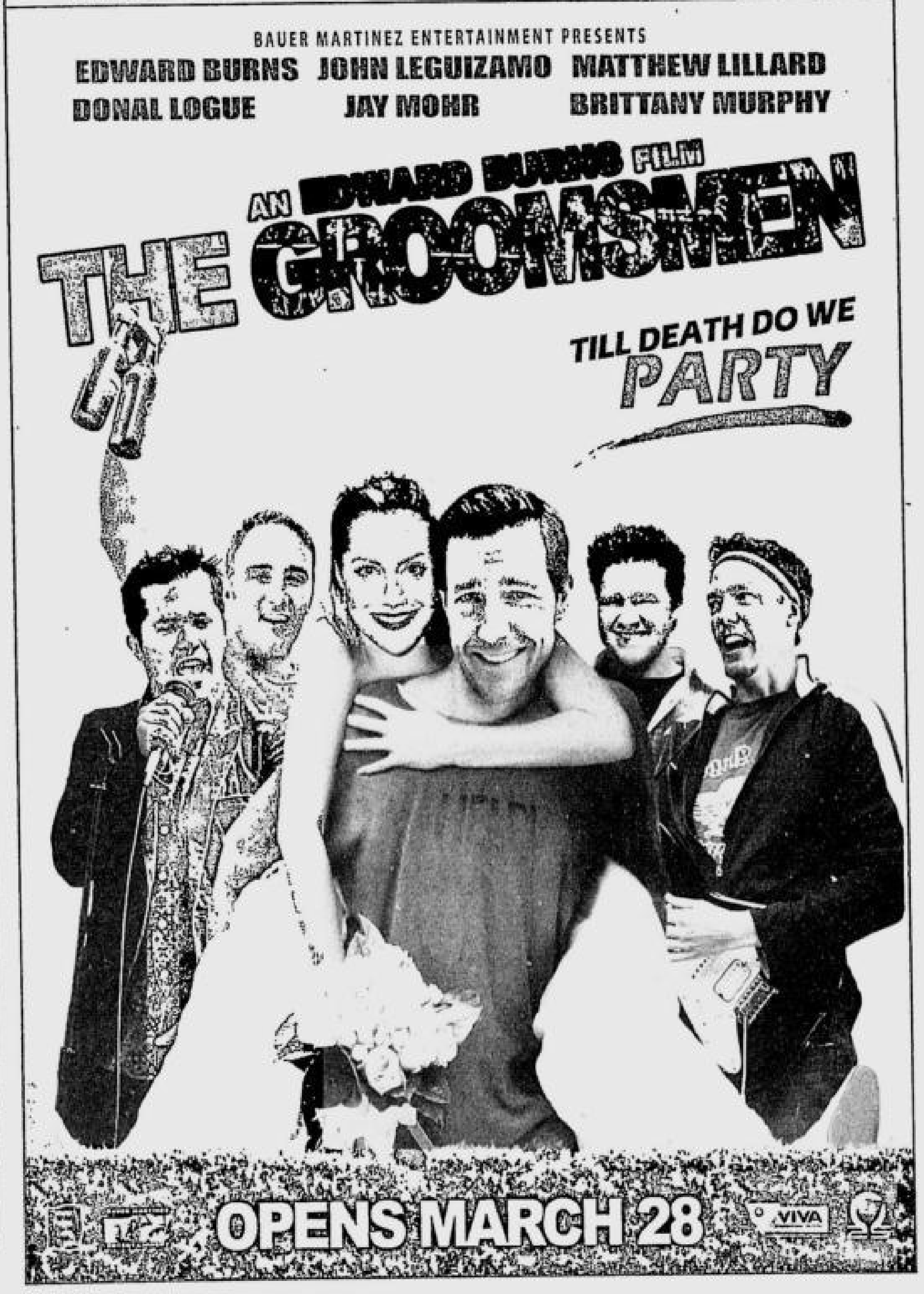

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AT THE CINEMAS
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G1 GLORIETTA 1	1 TURISTAS	2 NORBIT	3 ALPHA DOG	4 ZOMBIES			
G4 GLORIETTA 4	1 TURISTAS	2 DREAMGIRLS	3 THX 300 GUARANTEED SEATS	4 BREAKING & ENTERING	5 BECAUSE I SAID SO	6 NORBIT	7 PREMONITION
GB1 GREENBELT 1	1 300	2 NORBIT					
GB3 GREENBELT 3	1 THX 300 GUARANTEED SEATS	2 THX NORBIT GUARANTEED SEATS	3 BREAKING & ENTERING GUARANTEED SEATS	4 PREMONITION GUARANTEED SEATS	5 TURISTAS GUARANTEED SEATS		
ATC ALABANG TOWN CENTER	1 THX NORBIT GUARANTEED SEATS	2 TURISTAS	3 300	4 ALPHA DOG	5 PREMONITION		
ACC AYALA CENTER CEBU	1 DREAMGIRLS	2 THE PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS	3 300	4 BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA			
M2 MARKET! MARKET!	1 NORBIT	2 PREMONITION	3 MONAY NI SHOLI	4 ZOMBIES	5 TURISTAS		

At the Activity Center

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GLORIETTA	ALABANG TOWN CENTER
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AYALA CENTER CEBU	MARKET! MARKET!
For event inquiries, pls. call (032) 231-5342 loc. 332	Automatic Center: Gadgets Exhibit April 9 to 22, 2007

GREENBELT
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March 7 to 18, 2007

Onstage
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The greatest underdog story of our time is back for one final round.

Former heavyweight champion Rocky Balboa (Sylvester Stallone) steps out of retirement and back into the ring, putting himself against a new rival in a dramatically different era.

OPENS MARCH 28

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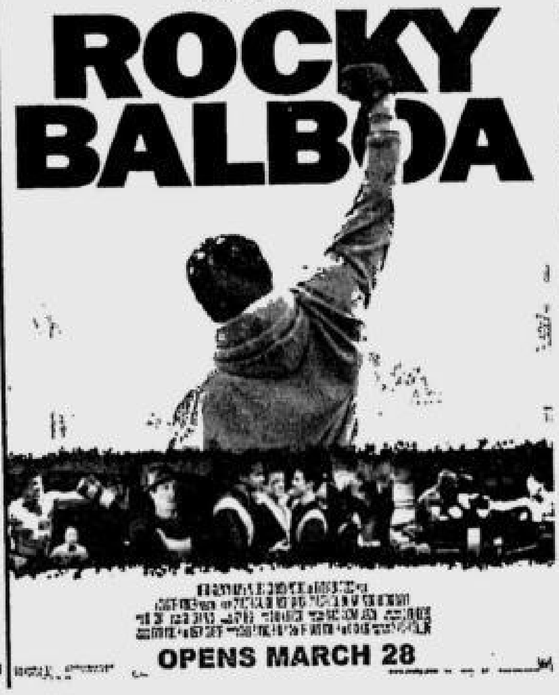
It ain't over 'til it's over.
ROCKY BALBOA

OPENS MARCH 28

Distributed by: 20th Century Fox
MTRCB Rating: PG-13

METRO MANILA

SM MALL OF ASIA 556-0104
IMAX
SUPERMAN RETURNS 3D
7:00PM
Admission Fee- P250
T-REX IN 3D
1:00PM 2:30PM 4:00PM 5:30PM
Admission Fee- P200
1 TURISTAS
2 PATHFINDER
3 NORBIT
4 BECAUSE I SAID SO/ DREAMGIRLS
5 ALPHA DOG
6 ZOMBIES
PREMIERE CINEMA
PREMONITION
CENTERSTAGE
300
THE PODIUM
CINEMA 1
300
CINEMA 2
NORBIT
633-8976

SM NORTH EDSA 929-5452
1 YOU GOT ME
2 PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS
3 ZOMBIES
4 PATHFINDER
5 HAPPY HEARTS
6 BECAUSE I SAID SO
7 300
8 NORBIT
9 MONAY NI MR. SHOOLI
10 ALPHA DOG
11 TURISTAS
12 PREMONITION

SM MEGACINEMA 633-1901
1 TURISTAS
2 YOU GOT ME
3 PREMONITION
4 300
5 BECAUSE I SAID SO
6 PATHFINDER
7 ALPHA DOG
8 MONAY NI MR. SHOOLI
9 HAPPY HEARTS
10 NORBIT
11 SIQUIJOR
12 ZOMBIES

SM CITY FAIRVIEW 935-0749
1 MONAY NI MR. SHOOLI
2 BECAUSE I SAID SO
3 DREAMGIRLS
4 300
5 YOU GOT ME
6 NORBIT
7 TURISTAS
8 PREMONITION
9 ZOMBIES
10 GHOST RIDER
11 PATHFINDER
12 HAPPY HEARTS

SM CITY STA. MESA 716-1416
1 300
2 TURISTAS
3 NORBIT
4 PREMONITION
5 HAPPY HEARTS
6 ZOMBIE
7 DREAMGIRLS
8 MONAY NI MR. SHOOLI
9 PATHFINDER
10 ALPHA DOG

SM CITY SAN LAZARO 786-2488
1 300
2 PREMONITION
3 ZOMBIES
4 TURISTAS
5 MONAY NI MR. SHOOLI
6 NORBIT

SM SOUTHMALL 806-6888
1 PREMONITION
2 NORBIT
3 ZOMBIES
4 300
5 ALPHA DOG
6 PATHFINDER
7 HAPPY HEARTS
8 TURISTAS
9 MONAY NI MR. SHOOLI

SM CITY BICUTAN 776-3055
1 TURISTAS
2 MONAY NI MR. SHOOLI
3 HAPPY HEARTS
4 300

SM CITY MANILA 523-9240
1 TURISTAS
2 ZOMBIES
3 PREMONITION
4 PATHFINDER
5 NORBIT
6 300
7 BECAUSE I SAID SO
8 DEAD PEOPLE 2
9 HAPPY HEARTS
10 YOU GOT ME
11 MONAY NI MR. SHOOLI
12 ZOMBIES

SM CITY DASMARINAS (046)4333201-04
1 300
2 BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA
3 DREAM GIRLS
4 PATHFINDER

SM VALENZUELA 293-3917
1 300
2 DREAMGIRLS
3 PATHFINDER
4 HAPPY HEARTS

SM CITY SUCAT 829-4975
1 HAPPY HEARTS
2 300
3 TURISTAS
4 PATHFINDER

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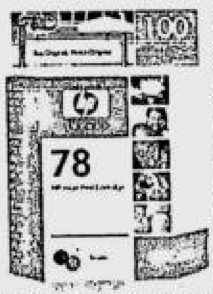

SM CINEMA
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LUZON

SM CITY BACOOR (046)417-3868
1 MONAY NI MR. SHOOLI
2 YOU GOT ME
3 PREMONITION
4 ZOMBIES
5 300
6 HAPPY HEARTS
7 TURISTAS
8 PATHFINDER

SM CITY CLARK (045)625-5844-45
1 MONAY NI MR. SHOOLI
2 300
3 NUMBER 23
4 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING
5 THE HITCHER
6 HAPPY HEARTS

SM CITY MARILAO (044)9332013-17
1 300
2 HAPPY HEARTS
3 YOU GOT ME
4 PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS

SM CITY BATANGAS 885-6401-04
1 BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA
2 HAPPY HEARTS
3 EPIC MOVIE
4 YOU GOT ME

SM CITY PAMPANGA (045)9637681-85
1 BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA
2 300
3 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING
4 THE HITCHER
5 MONAY NI MR. SHOOLI
6 HAPPY HEARTS

SM CIY LIPA (043) 756-7925
1 HAPPY HEARTS
2 EPIC MOVIE
3 MONAY NI MR. SHOOLI
4 THE HITCHER

SM CITY LUCENA (042)7108977-80
1 YOU GOT ME
2 HAPPY HEARTS
3 THE HITCHER
4 EPIC MOVIE

SM CITY BAGUIO (074)6197838-39
1 PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS
2 BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA
3 THE GOOD SHEPHERD
4 300

SM SUPERCENTER MOLINO (046)474-3160
1 TURISTAS
2 300
3 MONAY NI MR. SHOOLI
4 BECAUSE I SAID SO

SM CITY STA. ROSA (049)5349811
1 BECAUSE I SAID SO
2 MONAY NI MR. SHOOLI
3 HAPPY HEARTS
4 THE HITCHER

VISAYAS MINDANAO

SM CITY DAVAO (082)2976998
1 300
2 HAPPY HEARTS
3 BLOOD AND CHOCOLATE
4 MUSIC AND LYRICS
5 THE GOOD SHEPHERD
6 EPIC MOVIE

SM CITY CAGAYAN (088)859-2884
1 EPIC MOVIE
2 THE HITCHER
3 HAPPY HEARTS
4 300

SM CITY ILOILO (033)3209422
1 NUMBER 23
2 RESERVED
3 MONAY NI MR. SHOOLI
4 300
5 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING
6 THE FOUNTAIN
7 RESERVED
8 THE GOOD SHEPHERD

SM CITY CEBU (032)231-3876
1 EPIC MOVIE
2 DREAMGIRLS
3 BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA
4 PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS
5 YOU GOT ME
6 SIQUIJOR
7 GHOST RIDER
8 300

SM CITY BACOLOD (034) 708 1010
1 BLOOD AND CHOCOLATE
2 300
3 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING
4 THE FOUNTAIN

SCHEDULES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

TURISTAS
GO HOME.

A group of young American friends are heading to Brazil, expecting such an exotic adventure: pristine beaches, beautiful women, open culture, the nightlife.

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Watch how these friends escape their exotic adventure.

NOW SHOWING

SM CINEMA · SM MALL OF ASIA CINEMAS · THE PODIUM

Distributed by 20th Century Fox
MTRCB Rating R-13

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON MOVIE LISTING, MTRCB RATING, SCREENING SCHEDULES AND THE LATEST HAPPENINGS AT SM CINEMA

ROUNDUP

Star awardees

STAR CINEMA'S "KASAL, KASALI, KASALO" won five awards, including Movie of The Year, in the 23rd PMPC Star Awards For Movies held Friday at the UP Theater.

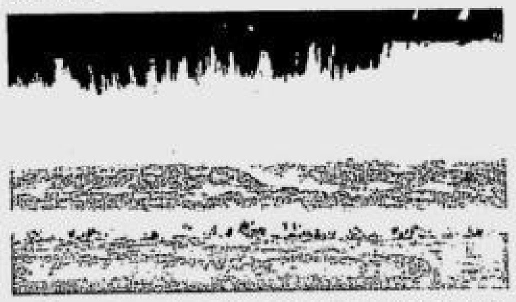
Jose Javier Reyes, director of the Judy Ann Santos-Ryan Agoncillo starrer, was named Best Director.

The movie also won Best Actress for Judy Ann Santos, Best Supporting Actress for Gina Pareño and Best Original Screenplay for Jose Javier Reyes.

Other major winners: "Inang Yaya" (Unitel Pictures), Digital Movie; Veronica Velasco and Pablo Biglang-awa, Jr. ("Inang Yaya"/Unitel), Digital Movie Director; Jericho Rosales ("Pacquiao") and Piolo Pascual ("Don't Give Up On Us"), Movie Actors; Allen Dizon ("Twilight Dancers"), Movie Supporting Actor.

Asian tsunami

National Geographic Channel documents the scientific puzzler behind the Asian tsunami on "Seconds From Disaster S3: Asian Tsunami."



Experts analyze the geologic episode, looking for clues behind the tsunami's overwhelming force.

The program airs March 28, 3 p.m. on the National Geographic Channel.

'Cape Buffalo'

In National Geographic Channel's "Hunter Hunted: Cape Buffalo," an investigation of cape buffalo attacks across Africa unravels a chilling revelation of the beast's cunning intelligence. The program airs today at 3 a.m. and tomorrow at 11 a.m.

Melodramatic treatment blunts 'Dreamgirls' edge

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

WHEN WE WATCHED "DREAMgirls" on Broadway decades ago, it blew us away with its cast's great singing, and its computerized set changes. We enjoyed other elements of the hit musical, but its plot and characters struck us as being on the obvious side.

Now that the musical is a hit movie, it's instructive to note that, after all the fiddling around and jazzing up, the material—and its principal plus and minus points—remain essentially the same.

The movie is visually and aurally stirring, its production design is a standout, its leads' singing is great—but the way its story and characters are developed is still predictable.

It's the 1960s, and the new female trio, the Dreamettes, has precious few prospects to perform—aside from singing backup for a middling black rock star (**Eddie Murphy**). Most frustrated of all about this arrangement is Effie White (**Jennifer Hudson**), who knows she's a great singer. But her group mates (played by **Beyonce Knowles** and **Anika Noni Rose**) convince her to be patient.

It helps in this regard that Effie and the group's new manager (**Jamie Foxx**) soon become a romantic item—but it hurts when Foxx eventually opts to make the more beautiful Knowles the trio's star singer, so it can profitably go mainstream—and big time.

This prompts Hudson's character to storm out of everyone else's life, and live a life of penury with her love child by Foxx. Meanwhile, Knowles does become a big star, but she soon realizes that Foxx has taken over, not just her career, but also her life and soul—and she eventually rebels.

Things come to a head with Knowles finally asserting her independence, and Hudson being brought back for the Dreams' last performance.

As you can see, the principal characters' interrelationships are the melodramatic stuff of which soggy TV soaps are made. The predictability of the movie's material pulls the entire production down and limits its artistic weight and impact.

Too bad

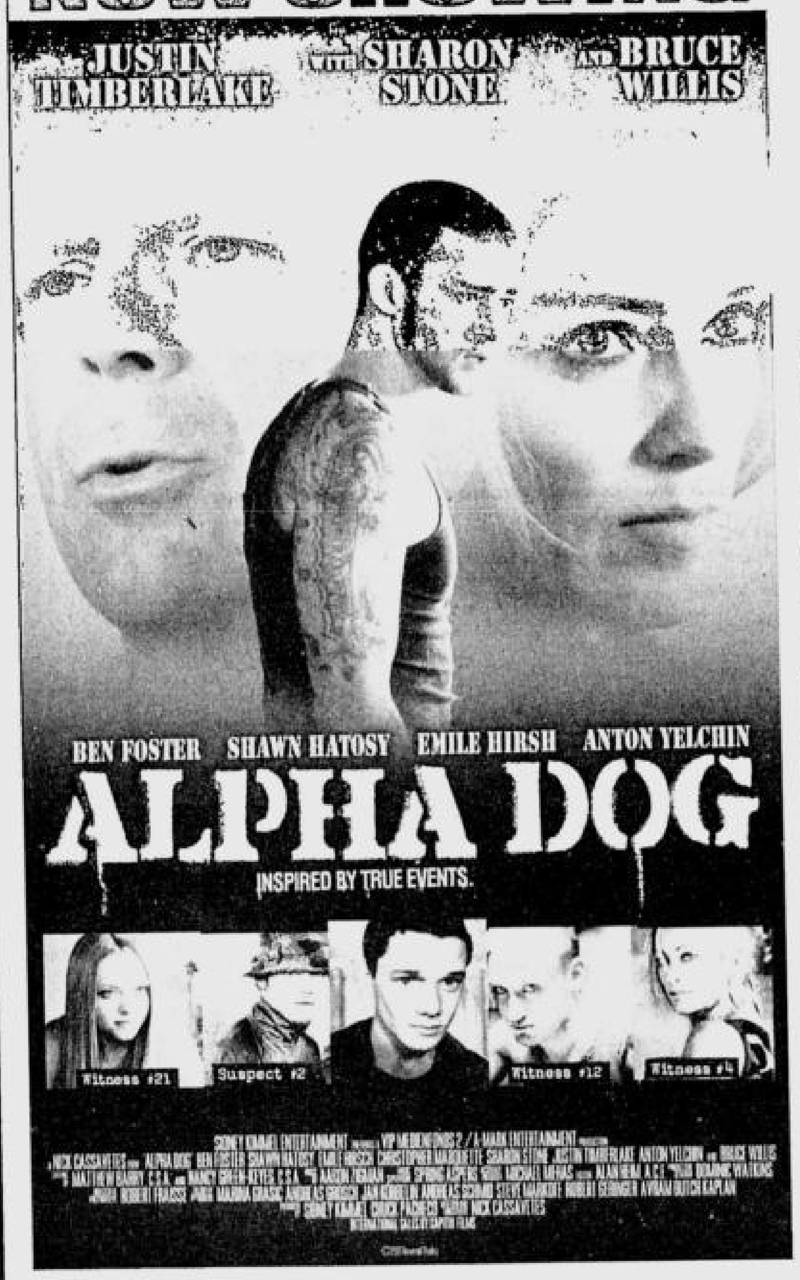
That's too bad, because "Dreamgirls" is classy and substantial in other respects. Another good thing about the movie is the way that it weaves in some savvy insights about the music business in the States before **Elvis Presley** made rock 'n' roll popular among W.A.S.P. fans.

This part of the film shows how black performers were generally discriminated against and kept to the dark sidelines of the entertainment industry. Murphy's character tried to break through with his rocking performance, but was shoved aside due to his color. It took the less in-your-face Dreams to break into the big time, despite their also being black.

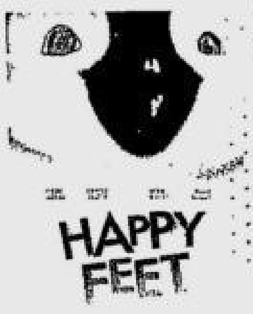
These points are made well and imbue the movie with a larger context that adds to its significance and cachet. On point of performance, Hudson and Murphy stand out despite the movie's melodramatic bout, but Foxx is strangely ineffectual as the man who figures so prominently in the trio members' lives.

As for Beyonce Knowles, her role is too nice compared to Hudson's feisty character, so she loses a lot of stellar focus, to the film's unfortunate discredit.

NOW SHOWING



THE PRESTIGE



NOW ON DISC

'The Prestige'

"THE PRESTIGE DVD Extras" from Warner Home Video includes annotations on the story of rivalry between two magicians played by Hugh Jackman and Christian Bale.

'Casino Royale'

"Casino Royale," which follows James Bond (Daniel Craig) in his first assignment as Agent 007, is available in a two-disc DVD.

'Happy Feet'

Warner Home Video releases on DVD the animated feature "Happy Feet," the story of young penguin Mumble, who proves that by being true to oneself, one can make all the difference.

'The Departed'

"The Departed" DVD from Warner Video is a two-disc special edition with nine additional scenes plus introductions by director Martin Scorsese. Leonardo DiCaprio and Matt Damon star.

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NORBIT 1:45 / 4:20 / 6:55 / 9:30	TURISTAS 1:10 / 3:20 / 5:30 / 7:40 / 9:50	PREMONITION 2:00 / 4:30 / 7:00 / 9:30	Globe PLATINUM CINEMA
ALPHA DOG 4:30 / 9:30	MONAY NI MR SHOOLI 12:30 / 2:30 / 7:15	ZOMBIES 1:30 / 3:30 / 5:30 / 7:30 / 9:30	
300 1:50 / 4:30 / 7:10 / 9:50	PATHFINDER 1:10 / 3:20 / 5:30 / 7:40 / 9:50	BECAUSE I SAID SO 12:10 / 5:00 / 9:50 DREAMGIRLS 2:20 / 7:10	NORBIT 1:10 / 3:45 / 6:20 / 8:55

Alimall 5

1 ZOMBIES 12:30 / 2:30 / 4:30 / 6:30 / 8:30	2 TURISTAS 12:05 / 2:15 / 4:25 / 6:35 / 8:45	3 ALPHA DOG 1:20 / 3:50 / 6:20 / 8:50
4 PREMONITION 1:20 / 3:50 / 6:20 / 8:50	5 300 12:30 / 3:10 / 5:50 / 8:30	DOLBY DIGITAL dts SDDS

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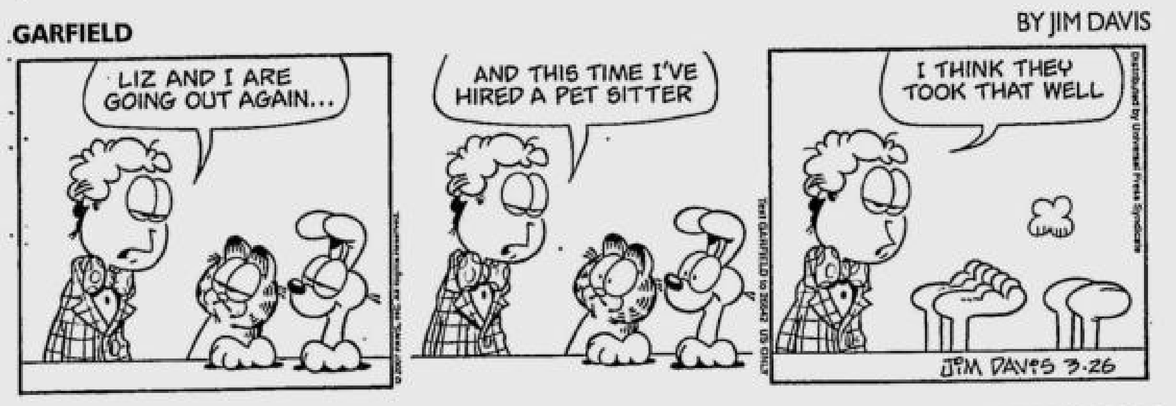
ARANETA COLISEUM
www.aranetacoliseum.com

YOUTH CONVENTION CONCERT
March 26, Monday 8 pm

PBA FIESTA CONFERENCE
Mar 28, Wed. 4:35 - Red Bull vs Air 21 7:20 - Purefoods vs Talk N Text

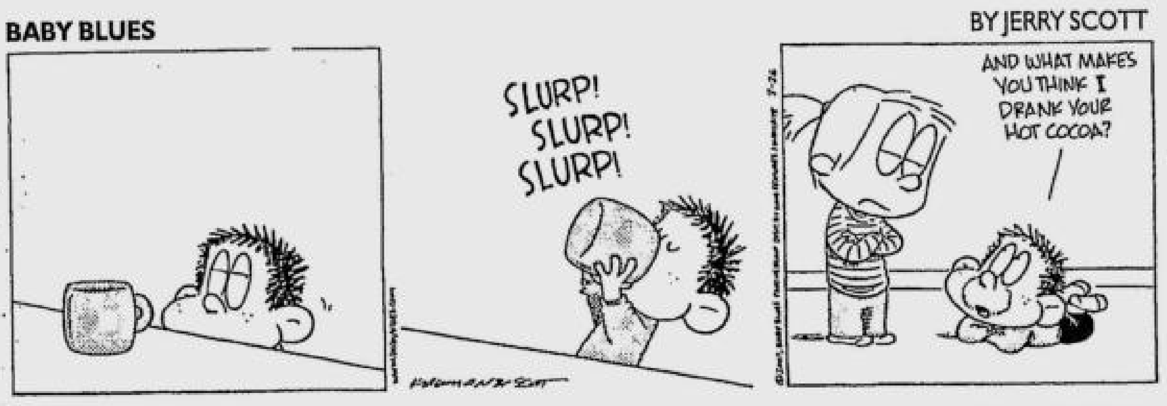
GARFIELD

BY JIM DAVIS


LIZ AND I ARE GOING OUT AGAIN...
AND THIS TIME I'VE HIRED A PET SITTER
I THINK THEY TOOK THAT WELL
JIM DAVIS 3-26

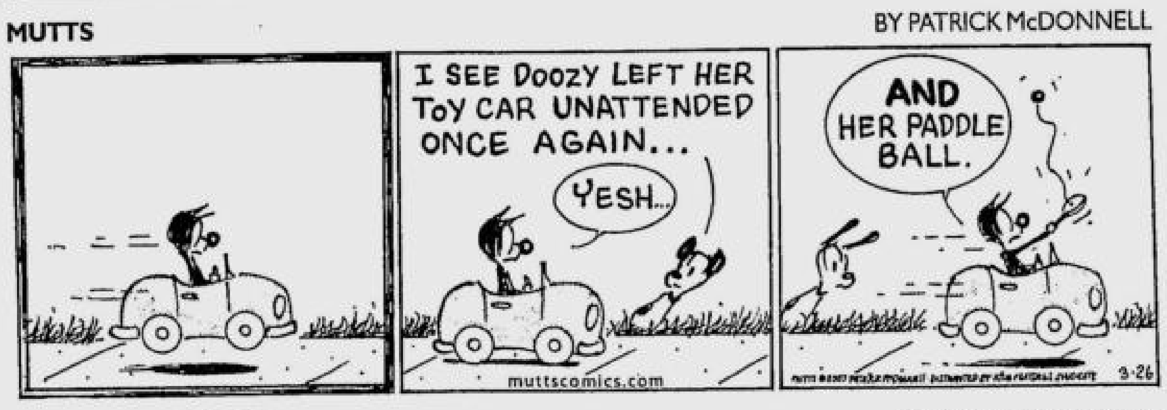
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


SLURP! SLURP! SLURP!
AND WHAT MAKES YOU THINK I DRANK YOUR HOT COCOA?

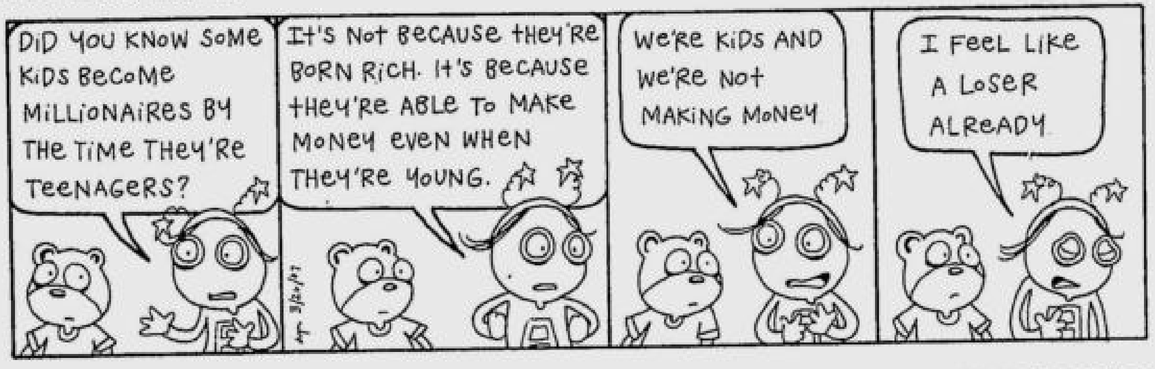
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


I SEE DOOZY LEFT HER TOY CAR UNATTENDED ONCE AGAIN...
YESH...
AND HER PADDLE BALL.
muttscomics.com
3·26

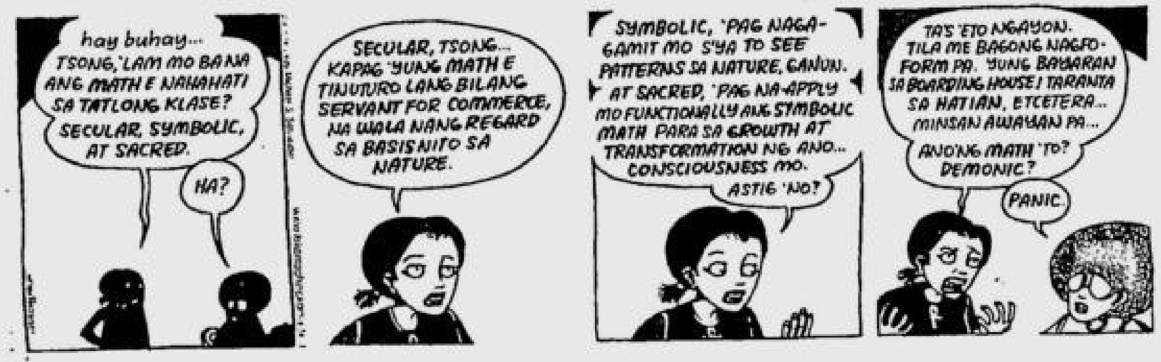
ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


DID YOU KNOW SOME KIDS BECOME MILLIONAIRES BY THE TIME THEY'RE TEENAGERS?
IT'S NOT BECAUSE THEY'RE BORN RICH. IT'S BECAUSE THEY'RE ABLE TO MAKE MONEY EVEN WHEN THEY'RE YOUNG.
WE'RE KIDS AND WE'RE NOT MAKING MONEY
I FEEL LIKE A LOSER ALREADY

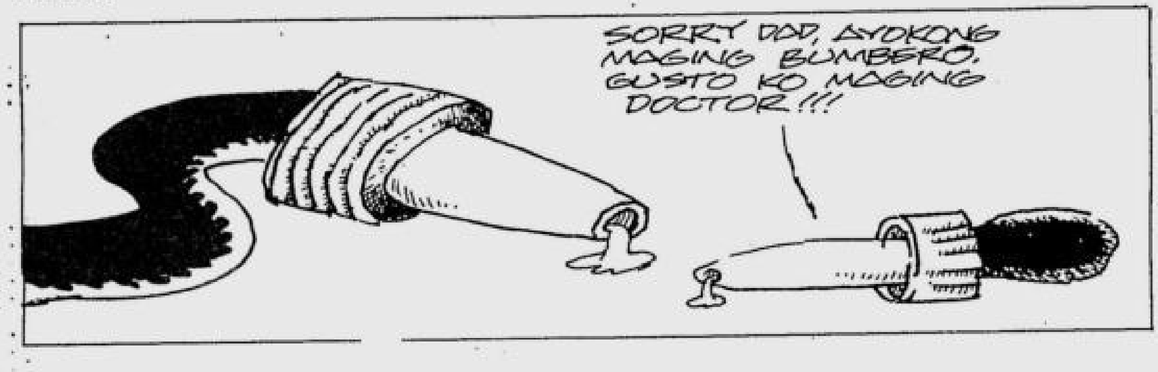
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


hay buhay... TSONG, 'LAM MO BA NA ANG MATH E NAHAHATI SA TATLONG KLASE? SECULAR, SYMBOLIC, AT SACRED.
HA?
SECULAR, TSONG... KAPAG 'YUNG MATH E TINUTURO LANG BILANG SERVANT FOR COMMERCE, NA WALA NANG REGARD SA BASIS NITO SA NATURE.
SYMBOLIC, 'PAG NAGAGAMIT MO S'YA TO SEE PATTERNS SA NATURE, GANUN. AT SACRED, 'PAG NA-APPLY MO FUNCTIONALLY ANG SYMBOLIC MATH PARA SA GROWTH AT TRANSFORMATION NG ANO... CONSCIOUSNESS MO.
ASTIG 'NO?
TAS 'ETO NGAYON. TILA ME BAGONG NAGFO-FORM PA. 'YUNG BAYARAN SA BOARDING HOUSE! TARANTA SA HATIAN, ETCETERA... MINSAN AWAYAN PA...
ANO'NG MATH 'TO? DEMONIC?
PANIC.

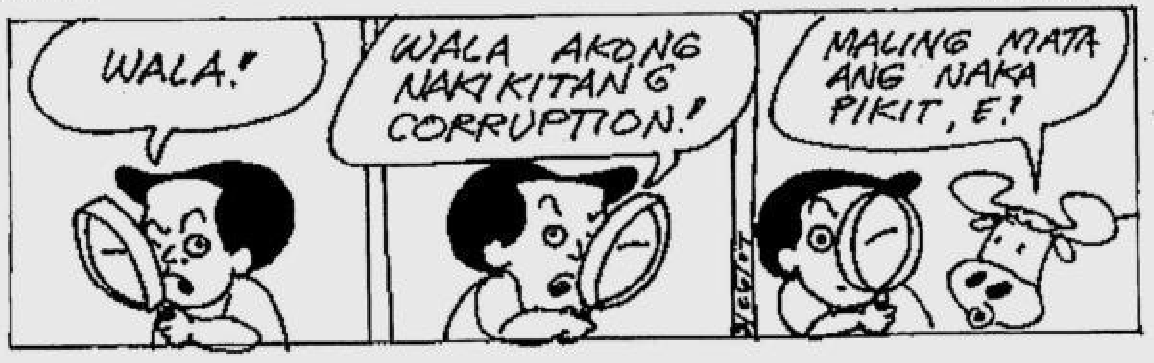
TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


SORRY DAD, AYOKONG MAGING BUMBERO, GUSTO KO MAGING DOCTOR!!!

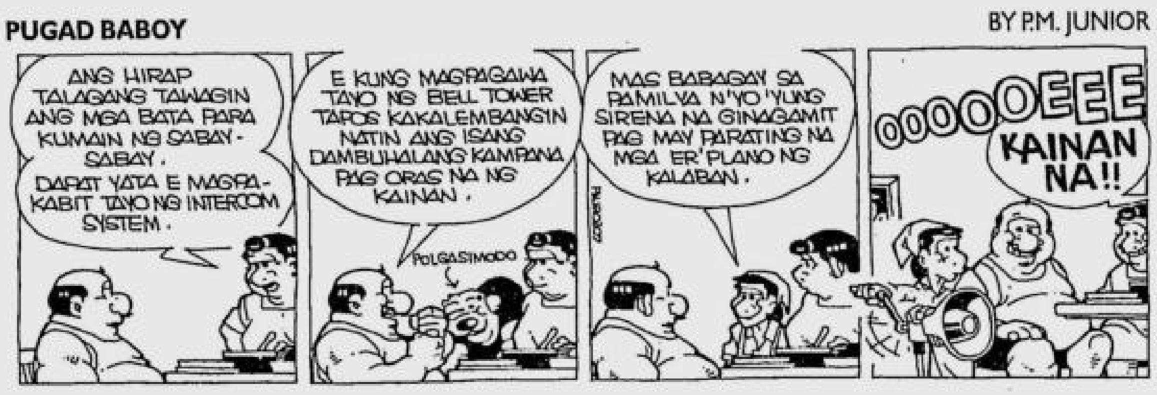
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


WALA!
WALA AKONG NAKIKITANG CORRUPTION!
MALING MATA ANG NAKA PIKIT, E!

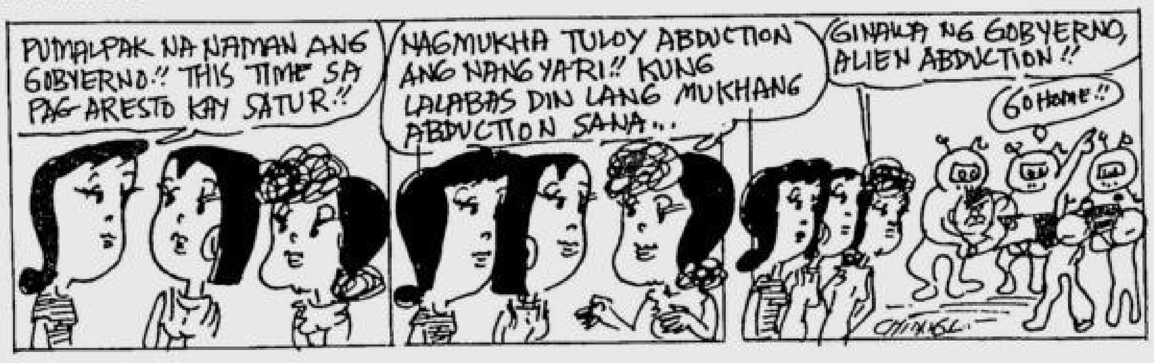
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


ANG HIRAP TALAGANG TAWAGIN ANG MGA BATA PARA KUMAIN NG SABAY-SABAY. DAPAT YATA E MAGPA-KABIT TAYO NG INTERCOM SYSTEM.
E KUNG MAGPAGAWA TAYO NG BELL TOWER TAPOS KAKALEMBANGIN NATIN ANG ISANG DAMBUHALANG KAMPANA PAG ORAS NA NG KAINAN.
POLGASIMODO
MAS BABAGAY SA PAMILYA N'YO 'YUNG SIRENA NA GINAGAMIT PAG MAY PARATING NA MGA ER'PLANO NG KALABAN.
OOOOOOEEE
KAINAN NA!!

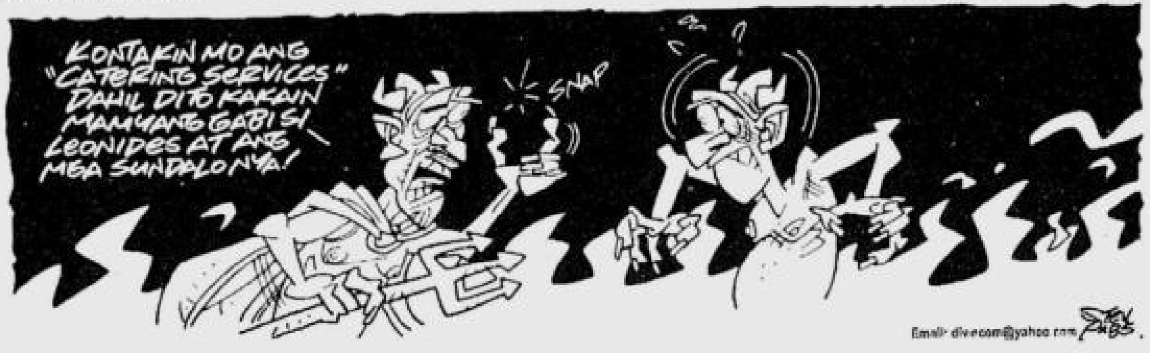
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


PUMALPAK NA NAMAN ANG GOBYERNO!! THIS TIME SA PAG-ARESTO KAY SATUR!!
NAGMUKHA TULOY ABDUCTION ANG NANGYARI!! KUNG LALABAS DIN LANG MUKHANG ABDUCTION SANA...
GINAWA NG GOBYERNO, ALIEN ABDUCTION!!
GO HOME!!

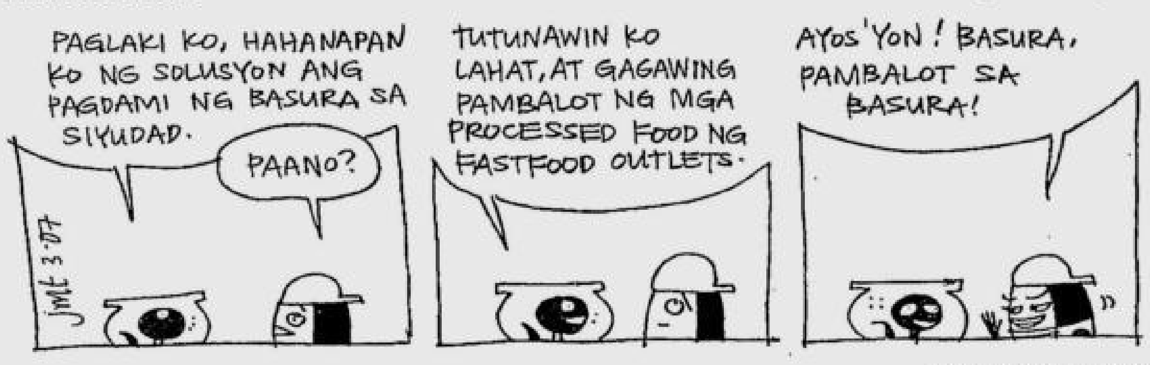
DIVINE COMEDY

BY STEVEN PABALINAS


KONTAKIN MO ANG "CATERING SERVICES" DAHIL DITO KAKAIN MAMAYANG GABI SI LEONIDES AT ANG MGA SUNDALO NYA!
SNAP
Email: divecom@yahoo.com

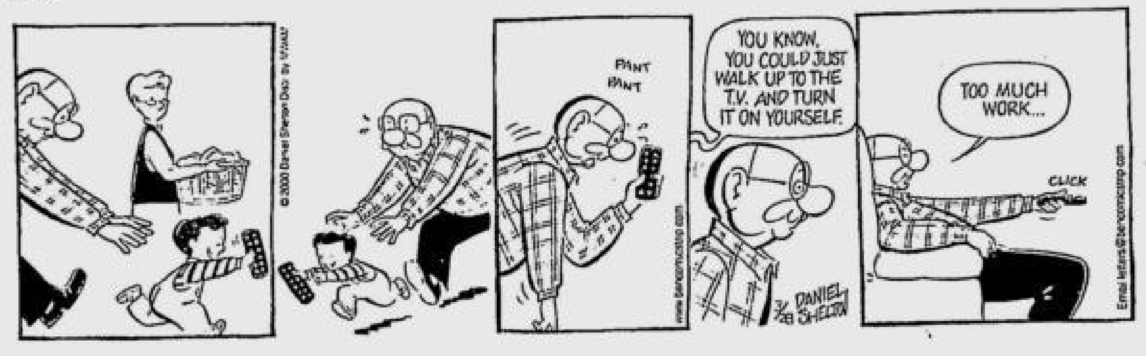
MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO

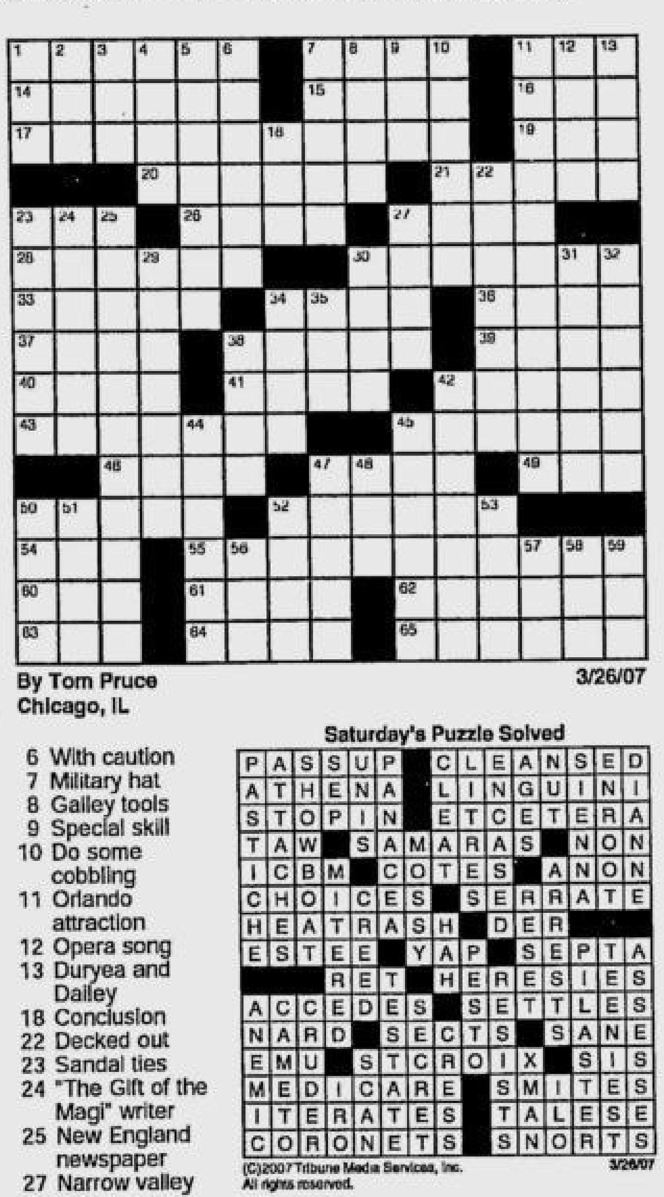

PAGLAKI KO, HAHANAPAN KO NG SOLUSYON ANG PAGDAMI NG BASURA SA SIYUDAD.
PAANO?
TUTUNAWIN KO LAHAT, AT GAGAWING PAMBALOT NG MGA PROCESSED FOOD NG FASTFOOD OUTLETS.
AYOS 'YON! BASURA, PAMBALOT SA BASURA!
JMT 3·07

BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


PANT PANT
YOU KNOW, YOU COULD JUST WALK UP TO THE T.V. AND TURN IT ON YOURSELF.
TOO MUCH WORK...
CLICK

DAILY CROSSWORD



By Tom Pruce
Chicago, IL

3/26/07

ACROSS
1 Eton rival
7 Fly high
11 June honoree
14 Tropical lizard
15 Rabbit relative
16 Novelist Levin
17 Everyone's home
19 Moral misdeed
20 Moves furtively
21 Ferber and Best
23 Weep loudly
26 Actor Ray
27 Richard of "Chicago"
28 Difficult to deal with
30 On the qui vive
33 Observe again
34 Parakeet's pad
36 Kind of meet
37 Picnic crawlers
38 Philosopher Kierkegaard
39 Tender spot
40 Support
41 Tarzan's friends
42 Jules of sci-fi
43 Cooperative interaction
45 Spooned
46 Jubilant gaiety
47 Dumbfound
49 Parched
50 French city known for textiles
52 Judd and Campbell
54 Fuss
55 Kent and Lane's paper
60 Unruly group
61 Say it __ so!
62 Northern Ireland
63 Ginger __
64 Those people
65 Without forethought

DOWN
1 That man
2 In the past
3 Boring routine
4 Cheers
5 Roadwork situation
6 With caution
7 Military hat
8 Galley tools
9 Special skill
10 Do some cobbling
11 Orlando attraction
12 Opera song
13 Duryea and Dailey
18 Conclusion
22 Decked out
23 Sandal ties
24 "The Gift of the Magi" writer
25 New England newspaper
27 Narrow valley
29 Try a new arrangement of letters
30 Quite a while
31 Moneymaker
32 Rapid
34 Facsimile
35 Have a life
38 Herb for stuffing
42 Ice cream pick
44 Input additional revisions
45 Kuala __
47 Like sailor's stories
48 Trifle
50 Tibetan priest
51 Object of devotion
52 Supreme Court count
53 Get smart with
56 Volcanic emission
57 To the __ degree
58 Sniggler's prey
59 Make an effort

Saturday's Puzzle Solved

P	A	S	S	U	P	■	C	L	E	A	N	S	E	D
A	T	H	E	N	A	■	L	I	N	G	U	I	N	I
S	T	O	P	I	N	■	E	T	C	E	T	E	R	A
T	A	W	■	S	A	M	A	R	A	S	■	N	O	N
I	C	B	M	■	C	O	T	E	S	■	A	N	O	N
C	H	O	I	C	E	S	■	S	E	R	R	A	T	E
H	E	A	T	R	A	S	H	■	D	E	R	■	■	■
E	S	T	E	E	■	Y	A	P	■	S	E	P	T	A
■	■	■	R	E	T	■	H	E	R	E	S	I	E	S
A	C	C	E	D	E	S	■	S	E	T	T	L	E	S
N	A	R	D	■	S	E	C	T	S	■	S	A	N	E
E	M	U	■	S	T	C	R	O	I	X	■	S	I	S
M	E	D	I	C	A	R	E	■	S	M	I	T	E	S
I	T	E	R	A	T	E	S	■	T	A	L	E	S	E
C	O	R	O	N	E	T	S	■	S	N	O	R	T	S

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3/26/07

HOROSCOPE

YOU BORN TODAY: You're hardworking, independent and responsible. People sense this about you, and they quickly respect and admire you. You know that the shortest distance between two points is a straight line. You like to work at your own pace. You prefer to do things your own way. In the year ahead, relationships and partnerships will be your primary focus.

Birthdate of: Keira Knightley, actress; Nancy Pelosi, politician; T.R. Knight, actor.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): Don't hesitate to put your own needs first now. This is the one time of year when it's totally appropriate to do this. It's all about you right now.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): Give yourself some moments of privacy. You need some real thinking time to start to plan out your new year, which is going to arrive very soon when your birthday comes around.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Accept all invitations now. Get out and schmooze! Talk to others, and tell them about your hopes and dreams for the future. Their feedback definitely will help you in some way.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): You are in the limelight now. Quite likely, you'll be asked to accept increased responsibilities for something. Don't shy away! You'll be able to do the job beautifully!

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Travel, increased education, publishing, the media and anything having to do with medicine or the law are the areas where you have your primary focus for the next few weeks. Jump on this.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): You're on a self-improvement kick now. Exercise, diet and pumping vitamins could be some of the things you're trying. Whatever works—do it!

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Partnerships and close friendships continue to be a major focus for you in the next few weeks. You can learn a lot about yourself by watching your behavior with others.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): You have such a strong urge now to get organized; capitalize on this. Make sure you give yourself the right tools to do a good job.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): You're in the mood to play. Romance and love affairs are also highly favored. Sports, movies, entertaining diversions, parties and playful times with children are tops on the menu.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): Discussions with parents and family members are significant in the next few weeks. Make sure you put extra time into your domestic scene for whatever reason.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Busy you! Short trips, errands, shopping, buying and selling, and increased time spent with siblings and relatives keep you on the run. (Gasp.)

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): In subtle ways, you're giving thought to your value system in life. You're actually wondering what really matters. You don't want to put your money on the wrong horse.

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis Sudoku

by Dave Green

3	4			7				8
	2			1	4		3	7
					2			
	9	7	1		5			
5	3						1	6
			2		9	7	4	
			9					
6	1		7	5			2	
2				4			5	1

Difficulty Level ★

3/26

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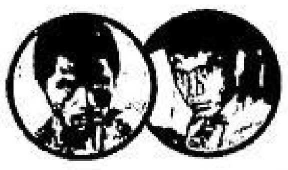
HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.
Tips and program at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

3	1	2	4	6	5	9	7	8
5	7	6	1	9	8	4	2	3
8	4	9	7	2	3	1	5	6
7	3	5	9	1	4	6	8	2
6	8	4	5	7	2	3	9	1
9	2	1	3	8	6	5	4	7
2	9	3	6	4	7	8	1	5
1	6	8	2	5	9	7	3	4
4	5	7	8	3	1	2	6	9

Difficulty Level ★★★★★



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Spelling lesson learned

By Ruth L. Navarra

ROB and Amber couldn't get "Philippines" right, causing a delay that got them the boot.

THE PHILIPPINES, IN A WAY, caused the downfall of the powerhouse that is newlyweds Rob and Amber Mariano in the "Amazing Race All-Stars." The couple misspelled the country in a detour that asked them to retrace the voyage of Ferdinand Magellan.

"We started out great until that detour because I didn't realize that I had to spell the countries correctly on the sign post. Because of that delay we caught only the second plane to Argentina," says Rob.

"It was quite a surprise for us, to be honest," Rob adds. (The couple were consistent first placers in the past three legs.) "But that's okay, Amber and I were playing for first or nothing. The race was designed in such a way that all teams would have the chance to win it. No skills were required in the last roadblock but sorting through the letters and finding one that's addressed to us [was pure] luck."

INQUIRER EXCLUSIVE

How close was your time to that of Charla and Mirna?

AMBER: We were 10 to 15 minutes behind them, we found the letter after they finished the race, although you wouldn't see that, the way [the show] was edited.

What can you say about Charla and Mirna calling you liars and names?

ROB: I think at that point they were very jealous of us. Charla was not very bad. But Mirna, the tall one, was very loud and obnoxious. I think she was just frustrated over how [well] we were doing. Amber did lie about the clue because she made them believe that she got it. There are no rules in the race about not lying.

AMBER: I was shocked that they believed me.

Do you hate any of the teams?

ROB: No, we don't. But Mirna is annoying.

Who would you like to win among the remaining teams?

ROB: Oswald and Danny, because they employ the same strategy that we did. That was, to win the race at all costs. Uchenna and Joyce are running a good leg.

Who did you want to beat really badly?

AMBER: I wanted to beat them all. But in the end, a lot of teams beat us. As far as who is our main competition, it was actually the race. Thinking about the other teams during the race can only distract you.

Would you say that you ran a good race?

AMBER: As long as you don't get into plenty of trouble, you would've run a pretty good race.

ROB: We ran together and we had fun doing it. We did not fight and I didn't mind spending 24 hours with her. So I say yes, we did.

Amber, you had a disagreement with your husband while waiting for the plane, how are you guys now?

AMBER: I regret that now because I should have stuck it up with my husband, as if it was just like here at home.

Which team do you think will take your place as the spice of the show?

ROB: No team could even come close.

What was the most memorable part of the race?

ROB: Being first in the past three legs was memorable. It was the first time in the history of "The Amazing Race." I think Phil's expression when we crossed the mat first for the third time was priceless.

Rob, what can you say about people who criticize the way you played the game? Do you think you're a villain?

ROB: They've seen how we played the game since "Survivor," and we've competed in "The Amazing Race" previously. There are fans who like our strategy and there are those who don't.

Any advice to "Amazing Race Asia" participants?

ROB: Be prepared. Do everything it takes to win. Adapt to the situation. There cannot be a set strategy. You should be able to deal with frustrations—you can run into situations that are beyond your control. Just like what happened to Amber and myself.

The "Amazing Race All-Stars" airs every Monday, 9 p.m. on AXN.

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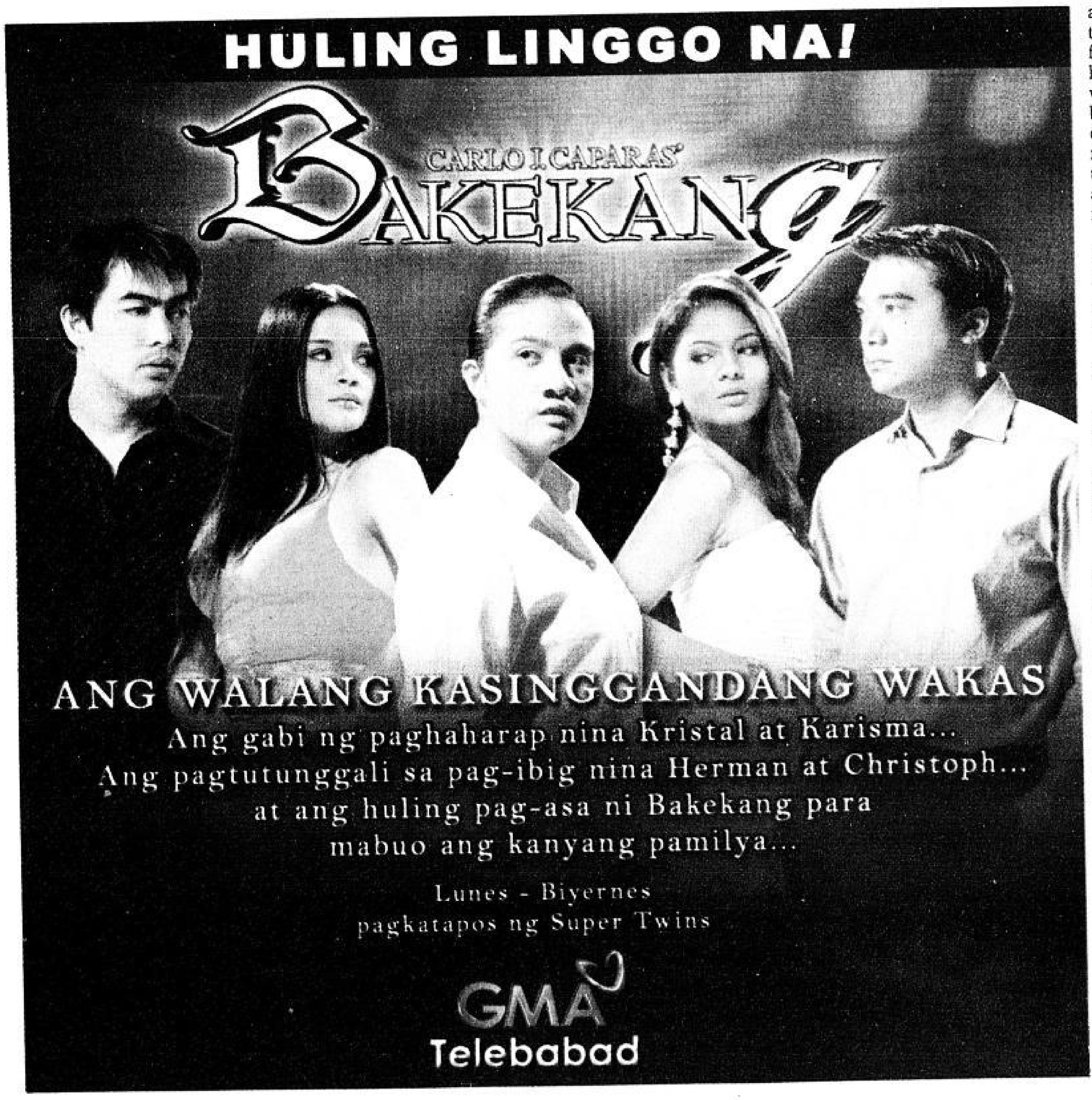
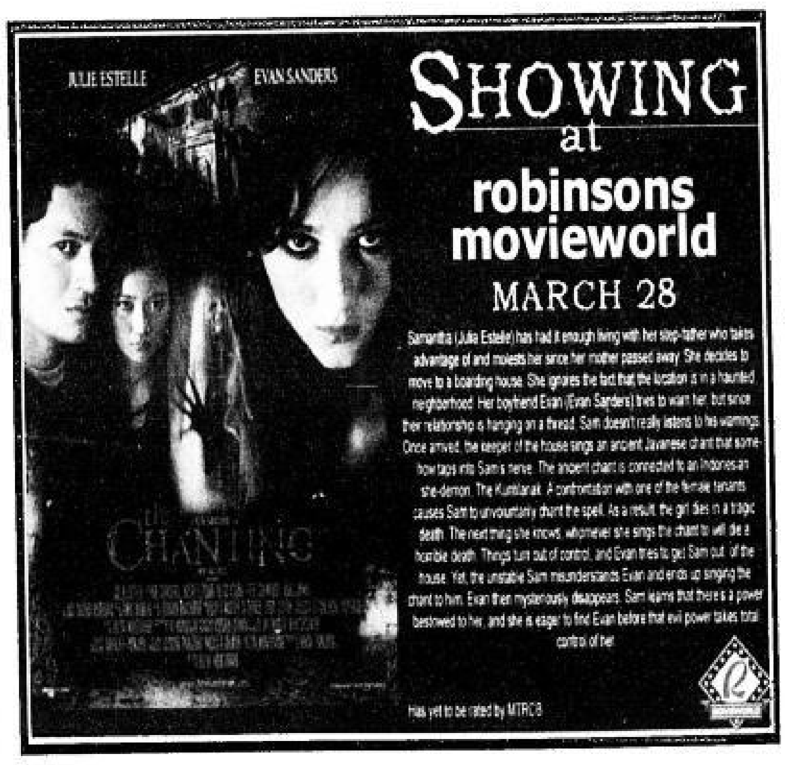


ANG WALANG KASINGGANDANG WAKAS
Ang gabi ng paghaharap nina Kristal at Karisma...
Ang pagtutunggali sa pag-ibig nina Herman at Christoph...
at ang huling pag-asa ni Bakekang para
mabuo ang kanyang pamilya...
Lunes - Biyernes
pagkatapos ng Super Twins
GMA
Telebabad



SHOWING at robinsons movieworld
MARCH 28
Samantha (Julie Estelle) has had it enough living with her step-father who takes advantage of and molests her since her mother passed away. She decides to move to a boarding house. She ignores the fact that the location is in a haunted neighborhood. Her boyfriend Evan (Evan Sanders) tries to warn her, but since their relationship is hanging on a thread, Sam doesn't really listen to his warnings. Once arrived, the keeper of the house sings an ancient Javanese chant that somehow taps into Sam's nerve. The ancient chant is connected to an Indonesian she-demon, The Kuntilanak. A confrontation with one of the female tenants causes Sam to unvoluntarily chant the spell. As a result, the girl dies in a tragic death. The next thing she knows, whomever she sings the chant to will die a horrible death. Things turn out of control, and Evan tries to get Sam out of the house. Yet, the unstable Sam misunderstands Evan and ends up singing the chant to him. Evan then mysteriously disappears. Sam learns that there's a power bestowed to her, and she is eager to find Evan before that evil power takes total control of her.
Has yet to be rated by MTRCB

MTRCB RATING G FOR GENERAL AUDIENCE
Children below thirteen must be accompanied by parents or adults, because some scenes of violence may not be suitable for them.
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THE WEINSTEIN COMPANY AND WARNER BROS. PICTURES PRESENT
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TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES
IN THEATERS 28 MARCH

WORLD / A20

Japan PM blinks, apologizes over comfort women

BUSINESS / B1

Swiss firm hits DOTC for 'bias' in $240-M project

ACROSS / A14

Priest enters gov race as 'alternative' bet

ACROSS / A14

Cojuangco vs Cojuangco in Tarlac election

METRO / A17

Election fever grips Metro Manila as mayoral bets flock to local Comelec offices

Abalos brother leads group of tricycle drivers

PARTY-LIST NG MGA KAPALMUKS!

By Christian V. Esguerra

WHAT DOES A DOCTOR of medicine have to do with a group of tricycle drivers seeking representation in Congress?

Not only that, Dr. Arse-

ABALOS/ A15

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS
Tuesday, March 27, 2007 ★★ 5 sections / Vol. 22 / No. 109 P18 website: www.inquirer.net

7 fighting for last 4 slots in Magic 12

Legarda, Villar, Pangilinan top latest SWS survey

A MONTH INTO THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN, THE SENATOrial race has tightened, with seven opposition, administration and independent candidates scrambling for the last four slots in the Magic 12, results of a nationwide survey conducted by Social Weather Stations on March 15-18 showed.

The seven candidates are former Sen. Gregorio "Gringo" Honasan, an independent candidate; reelectionist Sen. Joker Arroyo of the administration's Team Unity (TU), Tarlac Rep. Benigno Aquino III of the Genuine Opposition (GO), former Sen. Vicente Sotto III of TU, former Sen. John Osmeña of GO, Aquilino L. Pimentel III of GO and Michael Defensor of TU.

The survey had a margin of error of plus or minus 3 percentage points.

GO candidates Loren Legarda (58 percent) and Senate President Manuel Villar Jr. (57 percent) led the roster of candidates "statistically in contention" for the 12 Senate seats at stake, according to SWS.

Mahar Mangahas, SWS president, said the group of 14 candidates was "unchanged from February."

Legarda and Villar overtook reelectionist Sen. Francis Pangilinan, an independent candidate, who is in third place (48 percent).

The SWS 2007 pre-election survey used face-to-face interviews with 1,200 registered voters. They were divided into random samples of 300 each in Metro Manila, the rest of Luzon, the Visayas and Mindanao.

The respondents were asked the question: "If elections were to take place today, whom would you most probably vote for as senators of the Philippines?"

7 FIGHTING/ A15

ELEKSYON 2007

SWS March 2007

SENATORS	FEB*	MAR*	FEB[1]	MAR[2]
LEGARDA, LOREN B.	54	58	2	1
VILLAR, MANUEL JR. B.	52	57	3	2
PANGILINAN, FRANCIS N.	57	48	1	3
LACSON, PANFILO M.	42	42	5	4
ESCUDERO, CHIZ G.	36	40	7	5
CAYETANO, ALAN PETER S.	43	39	4	6
RECTO, RALPH G.	37	37	6	7
ANGARA, EDGARDO J.	27	32	13-14	8
HONASAN, GREGORIO B.	28	29	12	9
ARROYO, JOKER P.	29	28	11	10-11
AQUINO, NOYNOY C.	30	28	9-10	10-11
SOTTO, VICENTE III C.	31	26	8	12-13
OSMEÑA, JOHN HENRY R.	30	26	9-10	12-13
PIMENTEL III, AQUILINO L.	27	25	13-14	14
DEFENSOR, MICHAEL T.	21	21	15	15
ROCO, SONIA M.	19	19	16-17	16
ZUBIRI, JUAN MIGUEL F.	19	18	16-17	17
MAGSAYSAY, VICENTE P.	14	17	20	18-19
MONTANO, CESAR	16	17	18-19	18-19
PICHAY, PROSPERO JR., A.	13	16	22	20
TRILLANES, ANTONIO IV, F.	12	13	23-24	21
GOMEZ, RICHARD I.	16	10	18-19	22-23
ORETA, TERESA TAO A.	12	10	23-24	22-23
COSETENG, NIKKI M.	13	9	21	24
SINGSON, LUIS C.	7	7	25	25
CAYETANO, JOSELITO P.	6	4	26	26
CHAVEZ, MELCHOR G.	4	3	28	27-28
KIRAM, JAMALUL D.	2	3	30-33	27-28
WOOD, VICTOR N.	1	2	34-57	29-30
BAUTISTA, MARTIN D.	3	2	29	29-30
ESTRELLA, ANTONIO L.	1	1	34-57	31-32
LOZANO, OLIVER O.	1	1	34-57	31-32
ENCISO, RUBEN C.	1	0.4	34-57	33-37
SISON, ADRIAN O.	1	0.4	34-57	33-37
ORPILLA, EDUARDO F.	1	0.2	34-57	33-37
CANTAL, FELIX C.	0.2	0.2	58-80	33-37
PAREDES, JESS M.	0.3	0.2	58-80	33-37
UNDECIDED	14	10	-	-

* - PERCENTAGE
[1] - February Ranks, 80 names
[2] - March Ranks, 37 names

The names of candidates de-listed by the Comelec were excluded in the new poll.

SOURCE: SOCIAL WEATHER STATIONS INQGRAPHIC: CHONA GALANG, LOUIE BACANI

EXOTIC fish species fill a glass fish tank in a Hong Kong restaurant. The demand for coral fish has exploded in the wake of China's booming economy, leaving some species such as the humphead wrasse on the endangered list. REUTERS

China hunger for reef fish emptying Asian seas

HONG KONG—TURQUOISE FISH with red dots stare at hungry tourists from a tank at a restaurant in Hong Kong, the capital of the world's live reef fish industry, a lucrative trade devastating reefs across the Pacific Ocean.

Demand for coral fish, considered a delicacy, has exploded in line with China's booming economy and some species, such as the humphead wrasse, are already endangered.

"You may not be able to eat it in four to five years, whatever money you pay. This is the favorite among people from mainland China," said a fish merchant, who gave his name only as Chen.

Restaurant fish tanks in Hong Kong are filled with exotic fish species gathered in the waters around the Philippines, other Southeast Asia countries, Australia and even remote Pacific islands, such as Fiji and Vanuatu.

Humphead wrasse, also known as Napoleon wrasse, commands as much as $200 a kilo. A blue adult can grow to more than two meters and weigh 200 kg.

"That's a lot of money for a fisherman," George Woodman, a director of the conservation group Teng Hoi, said. "You can get a lot of people to move for that money ... The search is very big."

CHINA/ A8

Dutch ambassador describes PPT as a kangaroo tribunal

By Cynthia D. Balana and Michael Lim Ubac

THE DUTCH AMBASSADOR TO THE Philippines yesterday said the Permanent People's Tribunal (PPT) that found the Arroyo administration responsible for political killings in the Philippines was not much more than a kangaroo court—a view shared by Malacañang officials and their allies in Congress.

"We should not pretend that any other verdict on this government would have been possible. From that respect perhaps, we should think of it more as a kangaroo tribunal than anything else," Netherlands Ambassador Robert Vornis said.

A kangaroo court is defined by Webster as a self-appointed tribunal that disregards or parodies principles of law or human rights and is "so controlled as to render a fair trial impossible."

The PPT jury held the Arroyo administration responsible for human rights abuses "with the support and full awareness of the government of George Walker Bush."

Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita said the government was "doing everything to solve these killings" and that at least 60 cases involving such killings had been brought to court.

Vornis said the PPT's verdict was "not serious" because the accused were not even invited to the sessions.

"It would seem to me that the verdict

DUTCH/ A8

Victims' kin elated by guilty verdict

By Jocelyn R. Uy

THE VERDICT OF AN INTERNATIONAL forum holding the Arroyo administration responsible for unsolved killings in the Philippines may be legally nonbinding but it gave families of the victims a glimmer of hope in their quest for justice.

"We are happy because Ms Arroyo will soon be punished ...," said Concepcion Empeño, mother of University of the Philippines student, Karen Empeño, who was allegedly abducted by soldiers in Bulacan in June 2006.

Empeño was among the few people who gathered at a Quezon City hotel to watch a taped recording of the promulgation by the Permanent People's Tribunal (PPT) at the Pax Christikerk, a church in The Hague, the Netherlands, at 1 p.m. on Sunday (9 p.m. in Manila).

The video was provided by Karapatan, a militant human rights organization which has counted 834 alleged extrajudicial killings since 2001 when President Macapagal-Arroyo assumed power. (The INQUIRER has placed the figure at less than 300.)

VICTIMS' KIN/ A6

Rosales: It's not one-sided, it's both sides

By Nikko Dizon and Volt Contreras

MANILA ARCHBISHOP GAUDENCIO Cardinal Rosales yesterday called on both the military and the insurgents to stop the political killings in the country, even as he criticized the United States for investigating the murders when it was itself engaged in killings, particularly in Iraq.

"Unfortunately, it is very bad ... It's not one-sided, it's both sides," Rosales said.

"The government should be told and that's what we are doing," the prelate said in Filipino. "Now our brothers in the mountains should also be told. They also have to stop."

Rosales spoke to reporters after the ordination of Bishop Leopoldo Jaucian at the Christ the King Church in Quezon City.

Rosales said killing people was wrong "whether extrajudicial or judicial."

"To our brothers in the mountains, it is also wrong to kill. They also kill. Sorry for saying that. It comes to the same thing. That is equally wrong," Rosales said.

The prelate said he was also appealing to "our brothers of other faiths and other traditions, I don't want to name them, to also stop (the killings)."

He said the Americans were investigating the killings in the Philippines, yet they were engaged in killings in Iraq.

"You see how widespread this evil is in the world. In general, we must cultivate a culture of peace ... a culture of peace and helping each other," he said.

Rosales expressed the hope that every-

ROSALES/ A7

Esperon on new Leyte mass grave: We want to verify this, I'm not an undertaker

By Christine O. Avendaño and Ven Labro
Inquirer Visayas

GEN. HERMOGENES ESPERON YESterday said the authorities still had to verify an Army report that a second mass grave had been found in Southern Leyte containing the remains of victims of communist purges in the 1980s.

"We want to verify this before we invite you there so that no one could say that this burial site contained skeletal remains that came from Bicol or other places. I am not an undertaker," the Armed Forces of the Philippines chief of staff told reporters in Filipino.

Bayan Muna party-list Rep. Satur Ocampo, who is detained on charges he masterminded the killings by the communist New People's Army of suspected spies, has accused Esperon of "recycling" bones and dumping them in a mass grave.

The burial site was reportedly dug up in Inopacan, Southern Leyte, in August 2006. It was said to contain the remains of 67 victims of the NPA purges.

Esperon said that even if there was no mass grave site, one person buried by the NPA was still one life taken by the armed group.

ESPERON/ A15

Militants' calls for pullout of troops rejected

By Christine O. Avendaño, Nikko Dizon and TJ Burgonio

DEFENSE SECRETARY HERMOGENES Ebdane yesterday rejected calls by militant groups and the auxiliary bishop of Manila for the withdrawal of 300 Army soldiers deployed in 26 impoverished barangays in the capital.

"If the people themselves complain, then it's time to quit or to stop that activity," Ebdane told reporters.

Bishop Broderick Pabillo has joined demands by leftist groups for the pullout of the soldiers, saying they were harassing people and campaigning against left-

MILITANTS/ A7

EZ2 | FOUR DIGIT
3 5 | 3 6 7 7

Mid-Day SUERTRES Evening
7 0 0 | 9 1 7
(All in exact order)

MEGALOTTO 6/45
6 13 24 28 40 42
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Second FrontPage

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WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Northern Luzon will have mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers. Southern Mindanao will have cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms. The rest of the country will be cloudy with isolated rainshowers or thunderstorms.

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Partly Cloudy
Baguio	Cloudy with Rains	Roxas	Partly Cloudy
Tuguegarao	Cloudy with Rains	Cebu	Partly Cloudy
Laoag	Cloudy with Rains	Tacloban	Partly Cloudy
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Partly Cloudy
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Partly Cloudy	Cagayan de Oro	Partly Cloudy
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

COMPILED BY: KATE PEDROSO, INQUIRER RESEARCH/03/26/07 SOURCE: PAGASA

Solar I owners face dummy law raps

By Tina G. Santos

THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE YESTERDAY FILED charges for violation of the anti-dummy law against the officials of the shipping company that owns the oil tanker which sank off Guimaras Island last year causing the worst spill in the country's history.

Charged with violating Commonwealth Act No. 108 as amended by Presidential Decree No. 715, or the Anti-Dummy Law, before the Manila Regional Trial Court were Japanese nationals Hiroyasu Yamaguchi, Mototsugu Yamaguchi, Tomoki Tsubomoto and Hiromi Irishika, and Filipinos Clemente Cancio, Roberto Mena, Gregorio Flores and Angelita Buenaventura, all of the Sunshine Maritime Development Corp. (SMDC); and Dionisio Parulan, a former stockholder.

SMDC owns the tanker MT Solar I which sank on Aug. 11, 2006, in rough seas off Guimaras Island, spilling approximately half a million liters of bunker fuel oil and polluting the 220-kilometer coastline, fertile fishing grounds, marine reserves and tourist resorts.

The vessel, which lies at the bottom of the sea, was transporting about two million liters of bunker fuel for the oil company Petron when it sank.

In its resolution, the DOJ said the respondents violated the law when they allowed Hiroyasu and Mototsugu to be elected as treasurer and vice president, respectively, of SMDC.

SMDC is primarily engaged in coastwise shipping operations, a nationalized industry reserved for Filipino citizens or corporations and associations organized under Philippine laws with at least 60-percent Filipino ownership.

However, the DOJ noted that in many of SMDC's officials documents, both Hiroyasu and Mototsugu illegally occupied key positions in the corporation.

Apart from being the treasurer, Hiroyasu was also the chair of the board of directors. Mototsugu, on the other hand, was also one of the shipping company's board members, aside from being its vice president.

There were also several matters discovered during the investigation that revealed that the Japanese incorporators, in violation of the Anti-Dummy Law, largely controlled the company and were intervening in its management, operation, administration and control, the DOJ said in its resolution.

Of the P5.5 million paid-up capital of SMDC, P4 million was the actual share of the Japanese partners.

The NBI, which conducted the investigation, noted that the residences of the Filipino incorporators were not located in plush or exclusive subdivisions that would create the impression that they were indeed financially capable of investing huge amounts of money in SMDC."

Parulan, in fact, went to the NBI and executed an affidavit stating that they were mere dummies, the NBI said.

The Solar I was leased from a Panamanian-registered corporation called New Hinase Maritime, S.A. which in several documents was represented by its president Mototsugu Yamaguchi, who is also vice president of SMDC.

"It's crystal clear from the plethora of documentary evidence submitted by the NBI that the respondents have violated the provisions of the law," the DOJ said, adding that respondents know fully well that the holding of positions by the two Japanese nationals is prohibited by law."

"From the very beginning, the respondents connived or allowed themselves to be used as dummies of the Japanese incorporators," DOJ charged.

Negros tillers ask for fence to keep rivals out

By TJ Burgonio

FARMER-BENEFICIARIES OF THE land yesterday asked Agrarian Reform Secretary Nasser Pangandaman to fence off a portion of a sugar estate in Negros Occidental where some of them had been installed to keep a rival group of farm workers at bay.

The beneficiaries, who went on a 29-day hunger strike outside the Department of Agrarian Reform office and lifted it only after their installation in the land last Thursday, took this up in a meeting with Undersecretaries Narciso Nieto and Bernie Cruz at the DAR office.

The DAR officials promised to take it up with Pangandaman.

"If the area has been fenced off, we can stop the other group from intruding. After the installation, some of them continued to plant in the area," Jose Rodito Angeles, president of the farmers' umbrella organization Task Force Mapalad, said in an interview.

Now that their tent pitched outside the DAR office on Elliptical Road in Quezon City has been dismantled, the beneficiaries are ready to board a ship back home, and are only awaiting the DAR's order to fence off the area.

"If we have that order, we can always file charges of trespassing if others start to intrude," Angeles said.

Pangandaman, who had arranged the posting of teams of policemen and soldiers in the portion of the sugar estate, said he would study the request in the context of the "developments" inside the Hacienda Velez-Malaga in La Castellana town.

"It's worth looking into," he said in an interview.

The secretary sounded confident that the contingent of 30 Army soldiers and 30 local policemen had so far managed to avert any violence. He said the police would set up a permanent police precinct in the area to maintain law and order there.

In a surprising move last Thursday, Pangandaman, backed by soldiers and policemen, installed 57 of the 122 beneficiaries in the 144-hectare portion of the property, which was covered by a collective certificate of land ownership award (Cloa) issued by the DAR in 2002.

The land is part of a sprawling 445-ha sugarcane plantation owned by Roberto Cuenca.

A group of farm workers loyal to Cuenca had opposed the installation, and filed a motion for reconsideration with the DAR Region VI's resolution declaring the 122 beneficiaries legitimate. Once resolved, the DAR would go ahead with the installation of the rest.

The beneficiaries had been fighting to own and till the land since it was placed under the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program in 1996. Cuenca had managed to block this by filing cases in local courts.

But in 2004, two years after the beneficiaries were granted the Cloa, the Supreme Court ruled that all controversies on agrarian reform fell under the DAR's jurisdiction, clearing the way for the installation.

Keep off Arroyos' case, judge orders media

By Volt Contreras

A QUEZON CITY COURT HAS sternly warned media organizations, including the Inquirer, to keep off the child custody dispute between President Macapagal-Arroyo's brother-in-law, Negros Occidental Rep. Ignacio "Iggy" Arroyo, and his estranged wife, Alicia.

Judge Rosalina Luna Pison yesterday said that discussions on the case should be confined to the courtroom and not spill out into "the so-called 'court of public opinion' or the political arena."

Pison, who presides over Branch 107 of the Quezon City Regional Trial Court, stressed that the gag order she issued on March 22 not only covered the Arroyo spouses and their lawyers, but also "extend(s) with equal force to all newspapers publications and broadcast networks…."

That order, she said, "encompasses the entire spectrum of the relationship of the spouses, their properties, real or personal, bank accounts of whatever nature or nomenclature, and all details that cater to the idle curiosity of third parties."

It was issued "with the end view of protecting the welfare of the minor whom both parties profess to love, and preventing anyone from using this court as a venue for washing their dirty linen in public."

The case stemmed from the petition of the lawmaker filed in January for joint parental custody of their only child, a 9-year-old girl.

The judge ordered copies of her March 22 order to be furnished the media companies, naming the Inquirer among them.

Pison noted that a day after the gag rule came out, the Inquirer carried another front page story on the case "to the dismay of this court."

"The parties and counsels are sternly reminded that they have sought the intervention of this court to resolve their differences and that they must therefore confine their remedies to the four walls of this court and no other place," she said.

"This court will therefore jealously guard its prerogatives over this case and will not allow the issues to spill out beyond the confines of the courtroom," the judge added.

Pool champion denies molesting daughter

By Marlon Bernardino

DOUBLE WORLD POOL CHAMPion (9-ball and 8-ball) Ronato "Volcano" Alcano has denied accusations that he molested his 14-year-old daughter, who made the revelation in a television interview yesterday.

"*Hindi po totoo yang balitang yan.* (That is not true.), " Alcano said yesterday in an interview with the Inquirer.

Perry Mariano, Alcano's manager and benefactor, backed his ward's statement.

"*Hindi totoo yan. Marahil may nagbubuyo sa batang yan. Siyempre iba na kasi ang buhay ni* Ronnie *ngayon na bukod sa nagkapera ay may bagong kotse pa.* (That's not true. Someone put her up to it. Ronnie's life is different now. He has money and a new car.)," he said.

"*Ang totoo niyan ay umuutang pa nga yung bata sa akin ng* P100,000 *lingid sa kanyang ama kahit binigyan na siya ng kanyang ama ng P100,000.* (The truth is the child is borrowing P100,000 from me although her father already gave her P100,000.)," Mariano said. "*May* boyfriend *din yung bata.* (She also has a boyfriend.)"

He said Alcano's daughter will file a case of "child abuse" against Alcano in the Department of Justice.

Alcano has had a good run these past months. In November, he won the World 9-ball crown in Manila. In February, he got a P1-million contract to endorse Guinness Beer, the new title sponsor of the Asian 9-ball tour which will kick off on April 20 in Jakarta, Indonesia.

At the same time, he inked a one-year contract with San Miguel Corp.

Last month, he won the World 8-ball in Fujairah in the United Arab Emirates.

Seemingly undaunted, Alcano posted a 9-6 victory over Roel Esquillo last night in one of the inaugural matches of the 2nd BSCP National Pool Championships at the Ninoy Aquino Stadium in Manila.

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4. *Lower the costs of transportation and power* through the aggressive development of renewable domestic sources of energy.
5. *Reject new taxes* such as the proposed tax on text messaging, improve tax administration and exclusively utilize the additional revenues collected from EVAT for priority areas like education, healthcare, agriculture and science and technology.
6. *Strengthen the protection of human rights* by granting prosecutorial powers to the Commission on Human Rights and upgrading its investigative capabilities and review the government's counter-insurgency program to de-emphasize the heavily militarist approach and once again address the deeper causes of social conflict - poverty and injustice - through development programs.
7. *Contribute to the arrest of global warming and ensure a cleaner and better environment* for future generations through programs that would accelerate the use of cleaner fuels, reforestation, lower electricity consumption and waste recycling.
8. *Organize additional support programs for OFWs* that will provide them with legal assistance abroad in their countries of work, retraining services, entrepreneurial mentoring and welfare and counseling services to the families they leave behind.
9. *Reinforce the effectiveness of the press* in its role as watchdog against graft and corruption by decriminalizing libel and increasing penalties for harm done to newspersons.
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Customs collectors refuse to be bound by attrition law

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

DISTRICT COLLECTORS OF THE BUREAU of Customs yesterday refused to sign a performance contract that would bind them to the penalty clause of the attrition law which would result in their termination should they fail to meet their collection targets.

All of the 15 district collectors will instead submit a manifestation describing the contract as "unfair."

"I will submit the case to the lateral attrition board," Customs Commissioner Napoleon Morales told the INQUIRER after he met with the bureau's district directors.

The contract would have bound the signatories to the attrition law starting with the 2007 collection. The bureau was given a P228-billion revenue collection target for 2007, according to the contract.

Just as the law provides for bonuses to BOC employees in case of a surplus in collections, it orders the termination of employees who fail to meet their collection targets by 7.5 percent or higher. The implementing rules of the law call for the signing of a performance contract listing the individual targets of each collector.

Morales said he had anticipated the collectors' refusal to sign the contract. In a meeting last week, when he first presented the contract, the district collectors asked for more time to consult their subordinates.

"Whether the law is unreasonable, we cannot do anything because that is the law. We have to follow," Morales said, adding that he himself signed a performance contract.

If the penalty part of the law were to be implemented for the 2006 collection, seven of the 15 district collectors would have been attritable including officials and employees under them depending on their job description.

For instance, the Manila International Container Port collected the second highest amount last year, but its P46 billion was short by more than 21 percent of its P59 billion target.

This year, its target is P57 billion.

On the other hand, the Iloilo District collected only P306 million last year, but this was 108.6 percent higher than its P147 million target, so its collectors were not attritable.

This year, its target is pegged at P366 million.

Med tech must pay for misdiagnosis

By Leila B. Salaverria

THE SUPREME COURT YESTERDAY ORDERED A medical technologist to pay damages to a patient he erroneously found positive for the liver disease hepatitis B, which led to her temporarily losing her job.

The high tribunal affirmed an earlier Court of Appeals ruling ordering medical technologist Orlando Garcia Jr. of the Community Diagnostic Center (CDC) in Bataan to pay P125,000 in moral and exemplary damages and attorney's fees to Ranida Salvador for "gross negligence." A trial court had initially dismissed the case.

According to the high court, Garcia's failure to follow the proper procedures when he administered the Hepatitis B Surface Antigen (HBs Ag) test which resulted in a wrong diagnosis and the release of this cost Salvador her job and subjected her and her family to mental anguish.

Garcia may not have intended to cause the consequences which followed the release of the test result. However, his failure to comply with the laws and rules for the protection of the public constitutes a "breach of duty," the high court said in its March 20 decision.

Garcia, in his defense, denied he was negligent and said he followed appropriate laboratory procedures and "did everything within his professional competence to arrive at an objective, impartial and impersonal result."

But investigation showed that Garcia conducted the test for hepatitis B without a physician's supervision and released the results also without a physician's authorization as required under the Philippine Medical Technology Act and the Department of Health.

Dr. Bu Castro, past president of the Philippine Medical Association, was identified as the head of CDC in its license for 1993 and 1996. Castro, however, denied he owned or was employed by CDC but that he only went to the center when a case was referred to him. He said he did not examine Salvador and that the test results bore only his rubber-stamp signature.

The appeals court had exonerated Castro because he did not participate in issuing the results. The owners of the clinic were not charged.

"The public demands no less than an effective and efficient performance of clinical laboratory examinations through compliance with the quality standards set by laws and regulations," the high court said, adding that "Garcia failed to comply with these standards."

Salvador first went to the CDC for a medical exam in 1993 when she began working at Limay Bulk Handling Terminal Inc.

When the CDC submitted her hepatitis-B test result, her employment was terminated. Salvador said her father suffered a heart attack when he learned of the test result.

Salvador then underwent confirmatory tests for hepatitis B, including two at CDC, all of which came up negative. CDC's med-tech officer in charge then issued a certification saying Salvador's initial test results were wrong.

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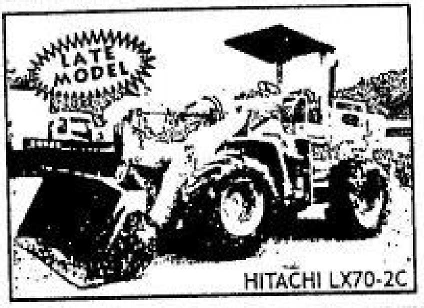

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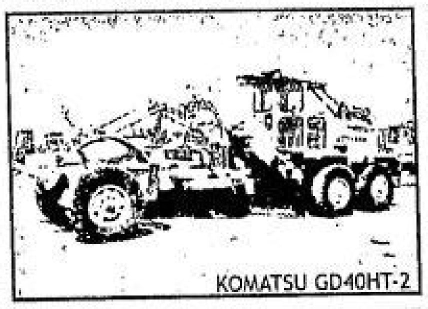
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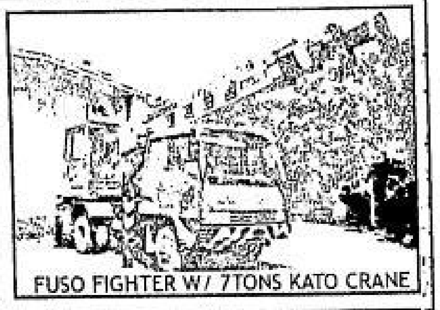
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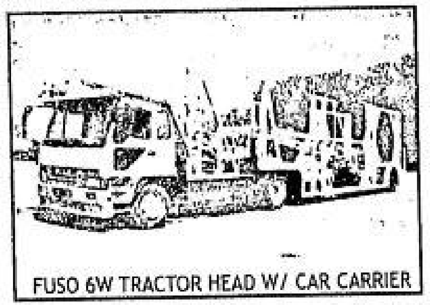
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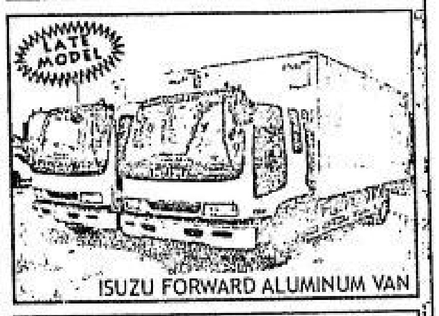

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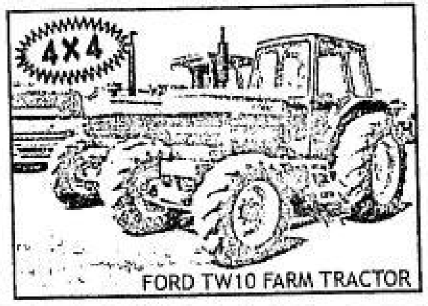

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THE DAILY GOSPEL

Tuesday, March 27, 2007
5th Week of Lent

1st Reading: Num 21:4-9
Gospel: John 8:21-30

Jesus said to the Pharisees, "I am going away, and though you look for me, you will die in your sin. Where I am going you cannot come." The Jews wondered, "Why does he say that we can't come where he is going? Will he kill himself?"

But Jesus said, "You are from below and I am from above; you are of this world and I am not of this world. That is why I told you that you will die in your sins. And you shall die in your sins unless you believe that I am He."

They asked him, "Who are you?"; and Jesus said, "Just what I have told you from the beginning. I have much to say about you and much to condemn; but the One who sent me is truthful and everything I learned from him, I proclaim to the world."

They didn't understand that Jesus was speaking to them about the Father. So Jesus said, "When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am He and that I do nothing of myself, but I say just what the Father taught me. He who sent me is with me and has not left me alone; because I always do what pleases him." As Jesus spoke like this, many believed in him.

Commentary

The people are plagued with serpents because they again complain bitterly in the desert even though they are cared for by God. For healing they are to look upon a bronze serpent propped upon a pole and then they shall recover. This is the image that Jesus will become—the Son of Man lifted up on crucifixion, nailed to a tree-and yet, anyone who looks upon him in his agony and sees what hate, violence, murder, sin, injustice, and evil can do, will be healed, forgiven, saved and drawn into this life that Jesus shares with the Father. Jesus only tells the world the truth he has heard from his Father, the Truthful One, and does only what pleases God. Do we do only what pleases God, obeying with Jesus and speaking the truth to the world? Do we stand with the Son of Man who will be crucified?

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Corrections

IN THE MARCH 26 ISSUE, the headline of a front-page window—"Security Council imposes new sanctions on Iraq"—and the banner headline of The World section on Page A29—"UN Council slaps new sanctions on Iraq"—misstated the country that was meted out sanctions by the UN Security Council. The sanctions were imposed on Iran—not Iraq.

* * *

IN THE SAME ISSUE, a word was omitted in the headline of news item in Worldbriefs on Page A29. The headline should have read, "Strong quake in central Japan; 1 killed"—not "Strong in central Japan, 1 killed."

* * *

IN THE SAME ISSUE, a front-page story—"Towering inferno a challenge to firemen"—misstated that the 2001 Manor Hotel fire, which killed 74 people, was the country's worst fire. The blaze that gutted the Ozone Disco in 1996 killed 160 people.

* * *

IN THE SAME ISSUE, Manuel L. Quezon III's "The Long View" column on Page A15 of the Opinion section—"Diminished Leaders"—misstated the year when Gregorio Honasan placed 13th in the senatorial race. Honasan finished 13th in the 2001—not 2004—senatorial race. Honasan, however, stayed in the Senate for three years to complete the unfinished term of Teofisto Guingona, who was appointed the Vice President weeks after Edsa II in January 2001. Honasan did not run for senator in 2004.

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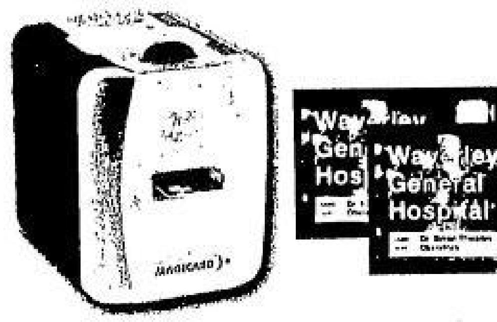

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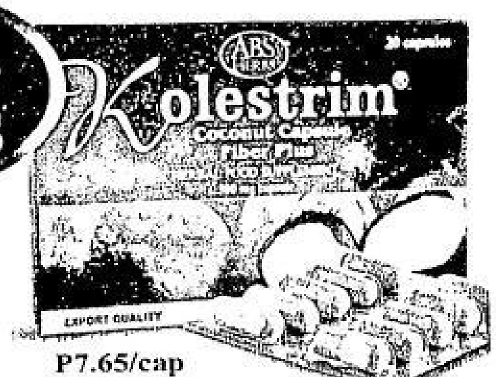

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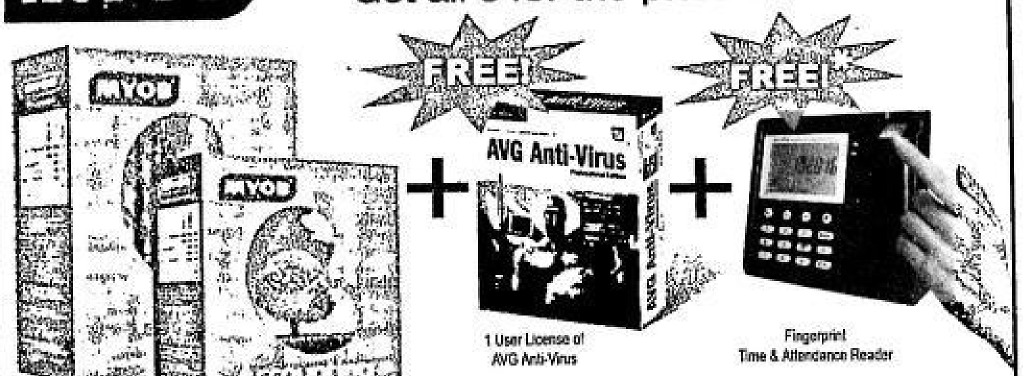

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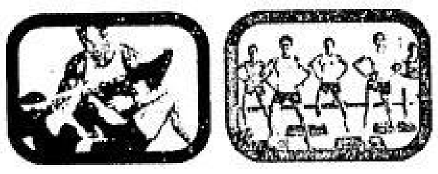

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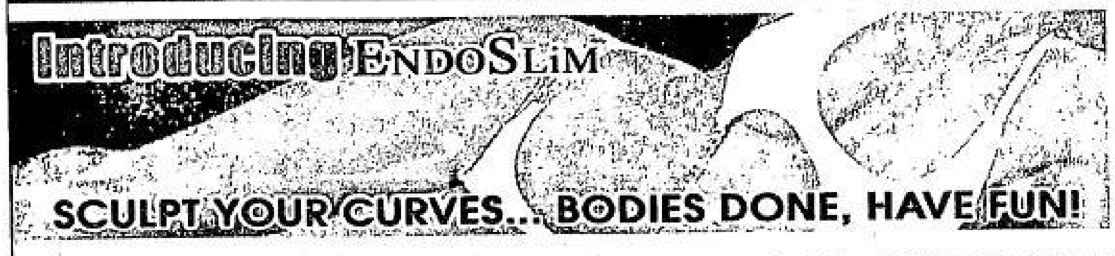

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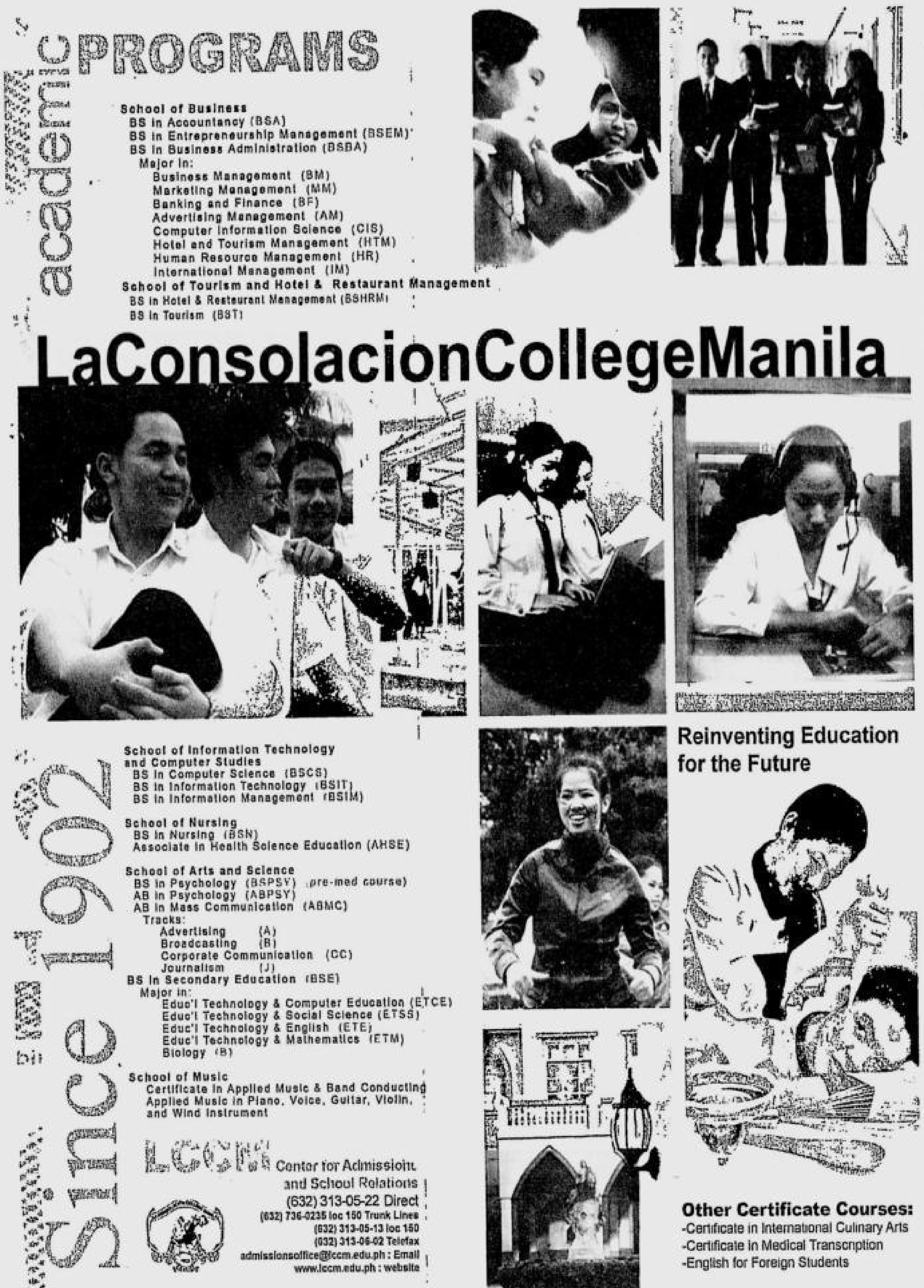

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Pimentel son says continued gov't denials strengthen suspicions

By Dona Pazzibugan

GENUINE OPPOSITION SENATORIAL CANdidate Aquilino "Koko" Pimentel III yesterday said the Arroyo administration's continued denial of the extent of extrajudicial killings in the country strengthened the perception that the killings were government-sanctioned.

He said the government, which is ultimately responsible for putting a stop to the killings, should face the problem rather than "keep on shooting the messenger."

"As a lawyer, I'm willing to give them the benefit of the doubt. But if they continue to avoid answering the substance of the message, then maybe there's substance to the accusation that this has become state policy," said Pimentel, a bar topnotcher and son of incumbent Sen. Aquilino "Nene" Pimentel Jr.

"Why does it keep on turning a blind eye? This is no longer just the Commander in Chief's responsibility. This is already the Commander in Chief's complicity," he added.

"If our government continues its state of denial that there are no human rights violations, when international organizations have expressed alarm at gross and rampant human rights violations, then the public should now speak up," Pimentel said.

He said that when elected, opposition senators would conduct a more thorough investigation.

"Our promise is we will investigate each and every one of these extrajudicial killings and get to the root of these and bring to justice the perpetrators, unlike the Arroyo administration that is in a state of denial," he said.

Victims' kin elated by guilty verdict

From page A1

Karapatan secretary general Marie Hilao-Enriquez delivered "expert testimonies" on the human rights situation in the country before the forum, composed of lawyers, writers and human rights activists.

"Ms Arroyo might not be jailed for this, but she has already been put to shame in front of the world," said Empeño, who came from Zambales to view the rather crude footage of the last day of the PPT's five-day hearing on the Philippines.

Erlinda Cadapan, mother of another UP student, Shirley Cadapan, who was allegedly abducted along with Empeño, also did not miss the show. She was relieved and elated about the "guilty" verdict, she said.

Cadapan gave her testimony and was examined by a six-member jury through a televideo conference during the hearing.

"I am hopeful that this will pressure the Arroyo government to return to us our missing daughters," she told the INQUIRER yesterday.

GMA, Bush

The international forum heard the charges brought by a broad coalition of social and religious groups, and found Ms Arroyo and US President George Bush responsible for the spate of unsolved killings and forced disappearances in the Philippines.

The 13-page decision, a copy of which was e-mailed to the INQUIRER late Sunday night, said the "wealth and consistency" of the oral and written testimonies provided by witnesses and experts were substantiated. It described the killings, enforced disappearances, massacres and tortures as "crimes against humanity."

"The extension and the systematic nature of the violations of the rights of the Filipino people committed by the governments of [Ms Arroyo] and with the support and full awareness of the government of (US President) Bush qualify the same violations as crimes against humanity ... such violations must be stopped immediately," read Jon Houtart, a Belgium-based professor and president of the session.

The video showed a blurred Houtart flanked by the other jury members—Oda Makoto, a well-known novelist and social activist from Japan; Ties Prakken, a professor in criminal law in the Netherlands; Oystein Tveter, lawyer and former director of the Karibu Foundation and former foreign ministry official in South Africa and Zambia; Irene Fernandez, a lawyer and social development expert from Malaysia, and Lilia Solano, an awardee of the 2005 Right Livelihood from Colombia.

Track records

Ms Arroyo's political allies labeled the verdict as black propaganda. But Karapatan said the tribunal was composed of "internationally eminent" personalities who each held credible track records in the field of human rights.

Ms Arroyo and Bush were accused of gross and systematic violation of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights and the Filipinos' rights to national self-determination and liberation.

According to the complainants, the sad and worsening plight of human rights in the Philippines must be seen in the context of the US strategies "for global economic and military hegemony" and the US-led "war on terror."

They also cited Oplan Bantay Laya, a counterinsurgency scheme initially drawn up under the Marcos regime, as the "final solution" of the US-backed Arroyo administration.

The jurors found "unequivocal" evidence putting the military in the center of the "greatest majority" of cases of human rights violation in the Philippines. According to the complainants, the Armed Forces of the Philippines continued to be an instrument of suppression under the guidance and support of the US counterinsurgency and antiterrorism agencies.

They also found "unacceptable" the inclusion of the Philippine government in the UN Human Rights Council, saying:

- It undermines the credibility of the United Nations.
- It is an intolerable offense to the victims.
- It is a denial of the many well-documented denunciations of the dramatic violations of human rights in the Philippines.

Depositions

The decision was handed down after the jury heard and examined several eyewitnesses, experts, relatives of victims of alleged extrajudicial killings through the televideo conference in Manila.

Among those who gave depositions and testimony in The Hague were Bishop Elmer Bolocon of the United Church of Christ in the Philippines and the Ecumenical Bishops Forum, Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (Bayan) chair Carol Pagaduan-Araullo, Bobby Tuazon of the Center for People Empowerment and Governance, and Rey Casambre of the Philippine Peace Center.

"The findings are legally nonenforceable but they are morally binding," said Bayan secretary general Renato Reyes Jr., one of the complainants.

Reyes expressed hope that the verdict would bring added pressure to the government to put a stop to the widespread crime against human rights in the country.

'Beginning of end'

Houtart, in concluding the session, said the jury would transmit the judgment to the United Nations, the International Court of Justice, the European Parliament and various foreign governments.

Evangeline Hernandez of Hustisya and Dee Ayroso of Desaparecidos said it was the "beginning of the end" of the Arroyo administration, which they compared to the regime of the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos.

The PPT first convened for the Philippines in Antwerp in 1980 to hear charges brought against Marcos. It later found the dictatorship guilty of grave and numerous economic and political crimes against the Filipino people.

Since the tribunal was founded in 1979 by the Italy-based Lelio Basso International Foundation, it has conducted 32 sessions considered to be "symbolic and instrumental" in carrying out hearings and pinpointing accountability.

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Rosales: It's ...

From page A1

one would make a promise to turn his back on violence.

He said the most the Catholic Church could do in light of all this was to reiterate Christ's call to respect each other and not kill one other.

"We don't have arms (to protect ourselves)," Rosales said. "We could even be killed. Remember a lot of priests have already been killed (protecting human rights)," Rosales said in Filipino.

ROSALES appeals to the military and insurgents: Stop the killing.

Keep it home

For its part, the Commission on Human Rights cautioned civil society against further taking the issue of political killings in the country to the international arena, saying the Arroyo administration should still be allowed "to solve its own problem" without foreign governments "interfering."

CHR spokesperson Ed Diansuy stressed this in reaction to the so-called verdict issued in The Hague by the Permanent People's Tribunal, which held the Philippine government responsible for the unsolved killings.

"Let's wait for the result of the special courts," Diansuy said, noting that it was the commission that recommended these measures.

He said the commission was "monitoring whether the government has been acting fast enough" and that its position as of now was "let's give them time."

"Let the Philippine government solve its problem instead of going to the international arena and having foreign governments coming in and interfering, which is wrong," he added.

"What we (in the CHR) fear is that other governments might think that the Philippine government cannot solve this," Diansuy said.

Malacañang on SWS survey: The President is not a candidate

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

MALACAÑANG YESTERDAY shrugged off the Social Weather Stations survey showing the low public approval of President Macapagal-Arroyo and her Cabinet.

"President Arroyo is not a candidate in this election and we are not inclined to play the game of polls and surveys," Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said in a statement.

This particular SWS survey was not about the coming elections but on the public satisfaction on the performance of the government, including the executive, the legislature and the judiciary.

The SWS said Senate President Manuel Villar and Vice President Noli de Castro continued to get high ratings of public satisfaction but the President and her official family got low or negative scores.

The survey said the government received negative 3 rating, and the Cabinet as a whole got negative 2 in the survey conducted during the period of Feb. 24-27.

The same survey said public sentiment was "merely neutral" for Speaker Jose de Venecia Jr. and Supreme Court Chief Justice Reynato Puno, while Villar got a "very good" net rating of positive 52 and De Castro a "fairly good" rating of positive 36.

Bunye said Ms Arroyo was "focused on a clear mission to [make] the economy grow and benefit the people" and was not bothered by the survey.

"We are not concerned about the surveys; we'd rather focus on the real everyday challenges that confront the people—alleviating hunger, creating jobs and checking prices of essential items," he added.

Militants' calls for pullout of troops rejected

From page A1

ist party-list candidates.

Military officials said the soldiers, who were fielded beginning in November last year, were engaged in anticrime and civic action activities.

Ebdane maintained that it was not the people in these barangays who were complaining about the presence of the military but the Left and militant groups.

Barangays welcome troops

Barangay residents accepted the work done by the military and were "even thankful for it," said Ebdane.

He also said he had been meeting with Commission on Human Rights officials but they had not mentioned to him about a reported CHR request for the AFP to recall the soldiers.

Ebdane acknowledged that his department was reviewing the deployment, just as it was reviewing the government's internal security operations.

Gen. Hermogenes Esperon Jr., Armed Forces of the Philippines chief of staff, said the military was still studying the CHR request for the AFP to pull out the troops in Metro Manila.

"No ... We're open to anything but we're studying it," Esperon told reporters, when asked whether he would order the pullout of troops in the metropolis.

Worse under Marcos

.Manila Archbishop Gaudencio Cardinal Rosales said that the activities of the military during the time of the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos were a lot worse than the reported militarization in Metro Manila's urban poor communities.

Still, Rosales said the present-day militarization—even if miniscule compared to the Marcos era—was something that should not be condoned.

"It has been there for a long time. We went through it during the time of Marcos, even after Marcos ... It's an old thing," Rosales said, speaking alternately in Filipino and English. "What we went through was worse than what is happening now. It's nothing."

Rosales spoke to reporters yesterday after the ordination at the Christ the King Church in Quezon City of Leopoldo Jaucian as the new bishop of Bangued, Abra.

President Macapagal-Arroyo, along with Papal Nuncio Archbishop Fernando Filoni and some 30 bishops, attended the event.

Rosales said that on his desk now was Pabillo's report on the troop deployment in Metro Manila. He did not comment on it but said that a copy of the report had been sent to Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita and that he would discuss it with the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines.

CBCP intervention

Yesterday, the fisherfolk group Pambansang Lakas ng Kilusang Mamamalakaya ng Pilipinas (Pamalakaya) and the party-list group Anakpawis urged CBCP president Angel Lagdameo to issue a pastoral statement condemning the deployment of troops in the metropolis and calling for their pullout.

"We appeal for the spiritual and moral intervention of the CBCP pertaining to this issue of AFP urban militarization and electioneering campaign in Metro Manila against party-list groups highly critical of the Macapagal-Arroyo administration," Pamalakaya's Fernando Hicap said in a statement.

The Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas voiced hopes the other bishops would follow the lead of Pabillo, and take a strong stance against the deployment of troops.

"We ardently hope that all the other bishops will follow suit to stop the military from further harassing and terrorizing the people," Willy Marbella, KMP deputy secretary general, said in a statement.

Anakpawis secretary general Cherry Clemente said there were many witnesses willing to testify against military officials and personnel harassing leaders and supporters of urban poor groups in Manila, Caloocan and Quezon City.

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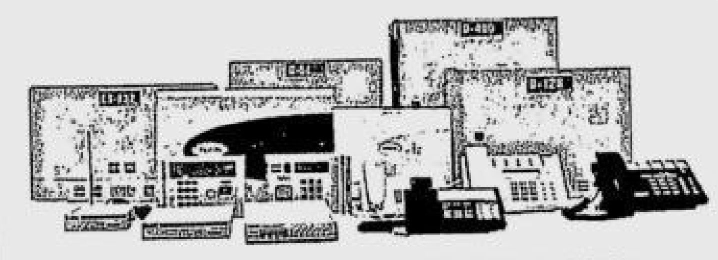

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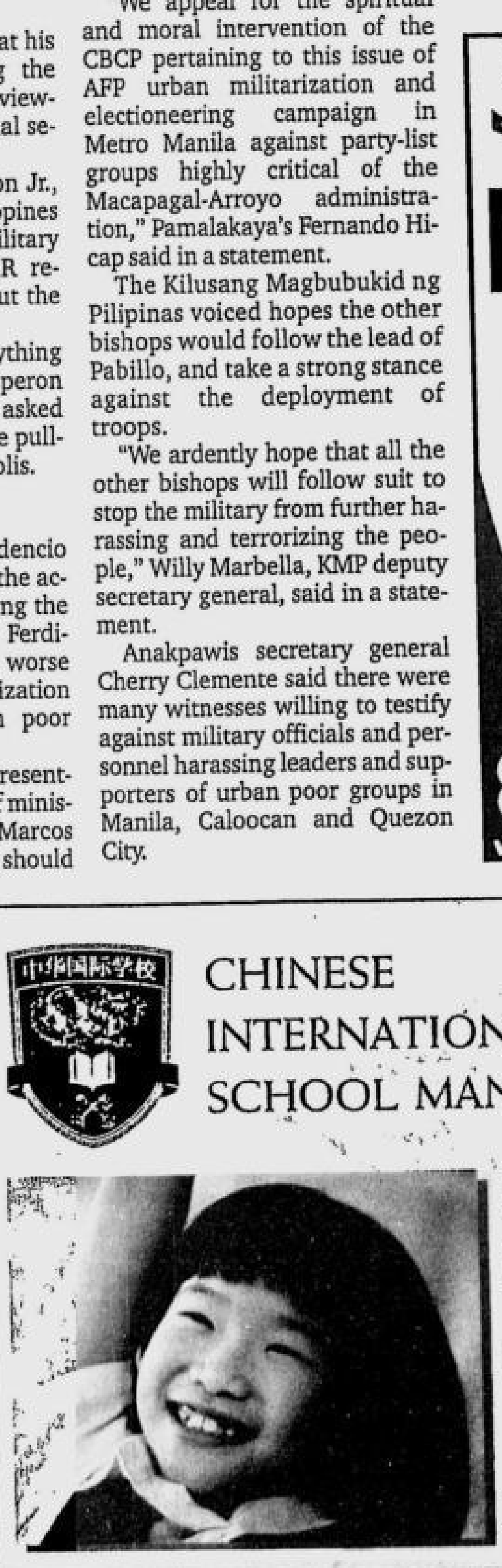

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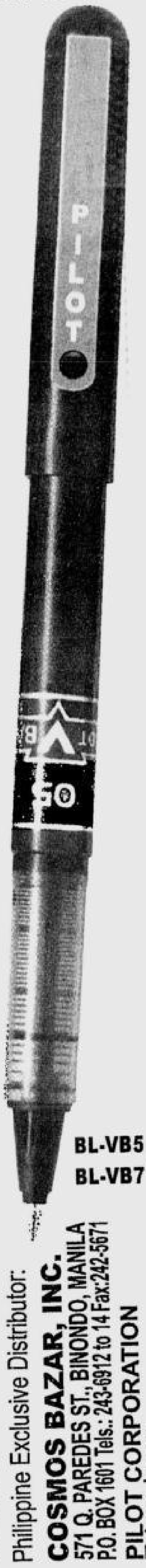

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Dutch ambassador describes PPT as a kangaroo tribunal

From page A1

of the tribunal was a foregone conclusion and, therefore, it's a tribunal that is, to me at least, more of a political exercise than a judicial exercise," Vornis told reporters.

Vornis said that, like other European countries, his country was also concerned about the human rights situation in the Philippines.

Stop the killings

Ambassador Alistair MacDonald, head of the European Commission (EC) in the Philippines, said the European Union would not issue any statement on the PPT's verdict because the tribunal was a "nonofficial body, non-government."

The European envoys spoke to reporters at a press conference called to mark the 50th anniversary of the European Union, an organization of 27 countries. The European Commission is its executive body.

Pressed to describe the Philippine government's human rights efforts, MacDonald said: "I don't think that's a question I can easily answer. The government is responsible for the citizens of the Philippines in protecting their human rights."

He added: "First, stop the killings and second is to investigate, identify and bring to justice those who have been carrying them out."

EC experts team

MacDonald said the European Commission would send an "assessment mission" of experts to determine what kind of assistance to give to the Philippines in investigating cases of extrajudicial killings.

Germany's Ambassador Axel Weishaupt said the commission was "in intensive dialogue" with the Philippine government to find out what specifically was needed.

VORNIS

"It's not an investigation. We will bring experts in the field to identify the kind of support we can provide," MacDonald said.

Malacañang dismissed the PPT as a classic example of an "international kangaroo court."

'The world knows'

"The whole world knows that it's the most biased, small non-government organization because the outcome was known to all long before the hearing started," National Security Adviser Norberto Gonzales told the INQUIRER by phone.

Gonzales also said: "It's a court that has no officialdom or anything. It's an example of the court of communists. A kangaroo court."

Gonzales said the concern of the international community with the human rights situation in the country "is equally our concern."

Referring to local communists, Gonzales said that "the world understands that those trying to push this as an issue against the government is a major player in killings and abuses of human rights."

The government has blamed the New People's Army for most of the murders, saying they were part of the group's purging its ranks.

Ermita said that of the 60 cases brought to court, four had resulted in convictions.

"We foresee even more cases resolved now that the special courts are in place," he said.

President Macapagal-Arroyo said the figures showed that law-enforcers "have been doing their jobs all along—but they did it outside of the spotlight."

Ebdane agrees

Defense Secretary Hermogenes Ebdane said the PPT was nothing but an "international kangaroo court."

"How can they come up with that conclusion when they haven't talked to any organization or agency?" he said.

Equally scornful was Armed Forces Chief of Staff Gen. Hermogenes Esperon Jr.

"Maybe it (PPT) is a branch of Karapatan or they are working together," Esperon told reporters.

'Patron of crimes'

Representatives Douglas Cagas of Davao del Sur and Eduardo Veloso of Leyte, in a joint statement, said it was ironic for the tribunal to talk about human rights violations while The Netherlands was "the host of the patron of these crimes."

They were referring to Communist Party of the Philippines founding chair Jose Maria Sison, who is on self-exile in Utrecht.

Cagas and Veloso said The Netherlands had been "coddling Sison for many years yet the (tribunal) had the tenacity to tag the Philippine government as responsible for the killings after a short and biased investigation."

With reports from Christine O. Avendaño and Christian V. Esguerra

It concerned the killing of John Celestia on February 1, 2001 in Murcia, Negros Occidental.

"The CHR does not name the accused but identified him as a soldier in the Philippine Navy who was convicted by the RTC Branch 47," Ermita said.

A separate list provided by the DOJ on the killings of mediamen showed three more resolved cases (but the list did not reveal the sentences imposed on the killers in two of the three cases).

In the May 13, 2002 killing of Edgar Damalerio, commentator of dxKP in Pagadian City, the accused Guillermo Wapille, a policeman, was dismissed from the service effective January 3, 2007 by the Cebu City regional trial court branch 19.

In the case of journalist Marlene Esperat, columnist of the Midland Review who was killed on March 24, 2005 in Tacurong, Sultan Kudarat, the RTC Branch 20 of Tacurong City convicted three suspects—Estanislao Bismanos, Jerry Cabayag and Randy Grecia. The court, however, acquitted "for lack of evidence" Sgt. Rowie Barua after he turned prosecution witness.

IN THE KNOW

Tribunal founded by Italian socialist

By Cyril L. Bonabente
Inquirer Research

FOUNDED IN 1979 IN BOLOGNE, ITALY, the Permanent People's Tribunal (PPT) is an international organization independent of any state authority. The tribunal publicly examines complaints of human rights violations. The complaints are usually submitted by victims or groups representing them.

Cases previously deliberated on by the PTT included human rights violations in Algeria, East Timor, Argentina and Afghanistan, and the 1986 Chernobyl nuclear disaster.

In 1996, the tribunal demanded a ban on nuclear power, and asked the United Nations to withdraw the International Atomic Energy Agency's mandate to promote nuclear energy for commercial uses.

The PPT was founded by the Lelio Basso International Foundation for the Rights and Liberation of Peoples. Basso, a member of the Italian Socialist Party sat in the Russell Tribunal organized by British philosopher Bertrand Russel. The tribunal investigated alleged crimes committed by the United States in its war against Vietnam.

The PPT was established a year after Basso's death.

The organization's current president is Italian legislator Salvatore Senese. Its general secretary is Italian physician Gianni Tognoni.

Case against Marcos

In 1980, the PPT heard a complaint filed by the National Democratic Front and the Moro National Liberation Front against then President Ferdinand Marcos. It found Marcos and the United States responsible for the suffering of the Bangsamoro people in Mindanao.

Among the jurors selected by the PPT that year were a theology professor at Harvard University, a law professor at Princeton University and a Nobel Prize-winning biologist.

PPT's verdicts are only recommendatory and not enforceable.

Aim of PPT

Lovella De Castro, a member of PPT's Philippine Coordinating Secretariat and of the human rights group Karapatan, said the PPT sought to make the international community aware of human rights violations in different countries.

The PPT's latest session on the Philippines tackled the alleged human rights violations of the Arroyo administration. According to the PPT's website, the session is "a major part of the campaign of the Filipino people to expose, condemn and fight the crimes of the Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo regime and its principal foreign accomplice."

It adds: "The United States, particularly the Bush administration, is the force behind the intensification of exploitation and oppression of the Filipino people as well as the peoples of the world."

Sison's refuge

Karapatan, one of the organizations that filed the complaint, provided the tribunal with "evidentiary documents," some of which had also been presented to UN Special Rapporteur Philip Alston, De Castro said.

PPT chose The Hague in the Netherlands as the venue of its latest session, which ran from March 21 to 25. The Netherlands has, for 19 years, been the refuge of Communist Party of the Philippines founding chair Jose Ma. Sison.

China hunger for reef fish emptying Asian seas

From page A1

With the marine stock already exhausted in nearby waters, Hong Kong traders are reaching far and wide for increasingly rare fish, such as groupers, snappers and humphead wrasse, spreading the unsustainable fishing habit across the Pacific.

Highly vulnerable

"Basically it's been like a vacuum cleaner across the region," said Andy Cornish, director for conservation at the WWF Hong Kong. "Reefs near Hong Kong have been depleted decades ago, and the trade has moved further and further away to source fish."

Biologists say reef fish are highly vulnerable to overfishing as they need five to 10 years before reaching breeding age. The trade is difficult to manage because the fishing is mostly carried out on a small scale by rural communities.

"Demand for many reef fishes is just too high ... Wild populations will continue to decline, if nothing is done because the fisheries are typically unmanaged," said Yvonne Sadovy, associate professor at the University of Hong Kong.

"China is where the demand for live reef fish is particularly heavy, and where it is also expected to grow ... A lot of the reef fish that come into Hong Kong are reexported into China," said the marine biologist.

Early this month, the IUCN World Conservation Union issued a warning that 20 species of grouper—a delicacy often served at Chinese banquets—were threatened with extinction unless conservation measures were introduced.

Use of cyanide

Large parts of reefs in the Philippines, Indonesia and Malaysia are becoming void of marine life as a result of overfishing and the use of cyanide to catch fish alive.

Many fishermen use cyanide, an illegal, exceptionally damaging and wasteful way to catch reef fish, which hide amongst the coral, marine experts say.

The divers squirt the toxin in the reef to stun the fish. Cyanide, however, also kills other marine life, including coral, and only about a quarter of the reef fish survive to make it to restaurants, experts say.

"We did two days of wild diving far from any civilization. Not a single fish was to be seen, not one," Charles Frew told Reuters after a trip to the waters off Leyte in the Philippines last month.

"I was shocked, more than anything ... It's got strong currents, beautiful blue water. There are some bits of nice coral. But there's nothing," said the director of Asiatic Marine, a company specializing in marine surveys and underwater filming.

While many live fish arrive in planes, many also come in on specially designed vessels. Hong Kong traders travel through thousands of islands in the Philippines, Indonesia or Malaysia, collecting the prized fish alive from local fishermen.

Asked how widespread cyanide was, Reinhard Renneberg, chemistry professor from the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, said: "I believe almost all big, undamaged fish are caught with cyanide."

"Cyanide in fish is no longer harmful for people ... It would be nice, if you could say you'd get big health problems, if you eat this fish," said Renneberg, who has developed a testing device for cyanide in live fish.

Slow HK response

An official of the Hong Kong's Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department said it had no plans to check cyanide in imported fish, which could help stem cyanide use.

But the department took the first step last December to manage the trade in a reef fish by requiring import licenses for humphead wrasse, the only coral fish listed as potentially threatened by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES).

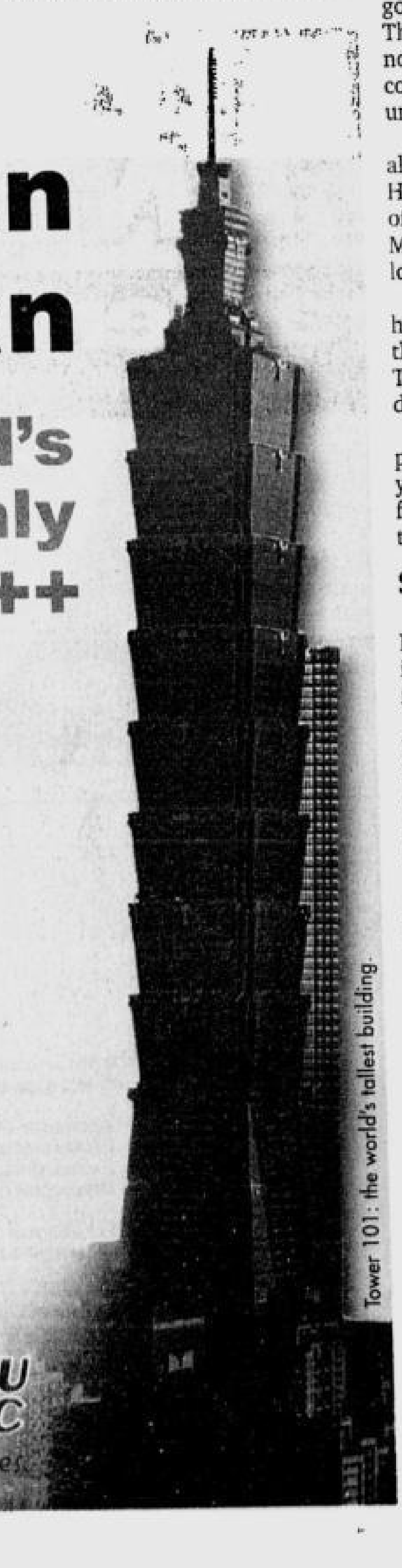
"This is really a test case," said Cornish from WWF. "If all the countries like the Philippines or Indonesia start developing a management plan for that species, that would be fantastic."

Last December, Philippine authorities arrested about 30 Chinese fishermen suspected of poaching. Their ship Hoi Wan was carrying more than 300 live humphead wrasse destined for Hong Kong.

Cheung Chisun, a senior Hong Kong official in charge of endangered species, said thousands of humphead wrasse had arrived in Hong Kong since last December, mostly from Indonesia, although more than half were reexported to mainland China.

Humphead wrasse still appears on menus in some restaurants in Hong Kong, although traders say the fish has become increasingly rare and smaller as well.

Asked about endangered species, fish restaurant manager Gu Chao Fan told Reuters: "You have to book a week in advance. There are not many these days." *Reuters*



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CEBU PACIFIC
It's time everyone flies

Erap gets day pass to receive award

GO AHEAD, CLAIM your award. But definitely there will be no sleepover at your mother's house, the Sandiganbayan yesterday told detained President Joseph Estrada.

Estrada is set to receive the "Outstanding Citizen of San Juan" award ahead of schedule today, when the town he used to head as mayor concludes the month-long celebration of its centennial.

In granting him a 10-hour pass, the antigraft court's Special Division said Estrada, to be placed under stringent police security, should be transported at 7 a.m. from his Tanay, Rizal estate to his house on Polk Street in Greenhills, San Juan, where his 102-year-old mother, said Dona Mary Ejercito is currently staying.

From there, the order he shall proceed to the commemorative parade at 9 a.m. to receive his award. He will have to be back in Tanay by 5 p.m. on the same day.

The San Juan government, now under the helm of Estrada's son, Joseph Victor "JV" Ejercito, originally planned to hold the awarding ceremonies during the grand ball at The Arena, which will start at 7 p.m.

In a petition filed by Estrada's lawyers' last week, the deposed president, under trial on plunder charges, also asked the court to allow him to stay overnight at his mother's house on Kennedy Street.

The Special Division, however, took into account the concerns of the police as raised in a comment filed with the court yesterday morning by Philippine National Police Director General Oscar Calderon and Chief Supt. Romeo Hilomen, director of the Police Security and Protection Office (PSPO).

Although the police officials did not object to Estrada's request, they suggested that the awarding ceremonies be moved to an earlier time. *Jocelyn R. Uy*

GO moves to new headquarters, bares 'war' logo

By Dona Pazzibugan

THE GENUINE OPPOSITION HAS A NEW LOgo, a new campaign theme and has just moved into its new headquarters.

GO has made the fight against corruption and poverty the cornerstone of its senatorial campaign for the May 14 elections.

With the theme, "*Kontra nakawan, sagot sa kahirapan* (Fight corruption, the answer to poverty)," GO's new logo features the symbols and colors of the Philippine flag. But the positions of the red and blue bars have been reversed—the red bar is above the blue bar.

"That means the people are at war," said campaign manager Sen. Sergio Osmeña III, who has been responsible for putting a sense of organization into GO's campaign.

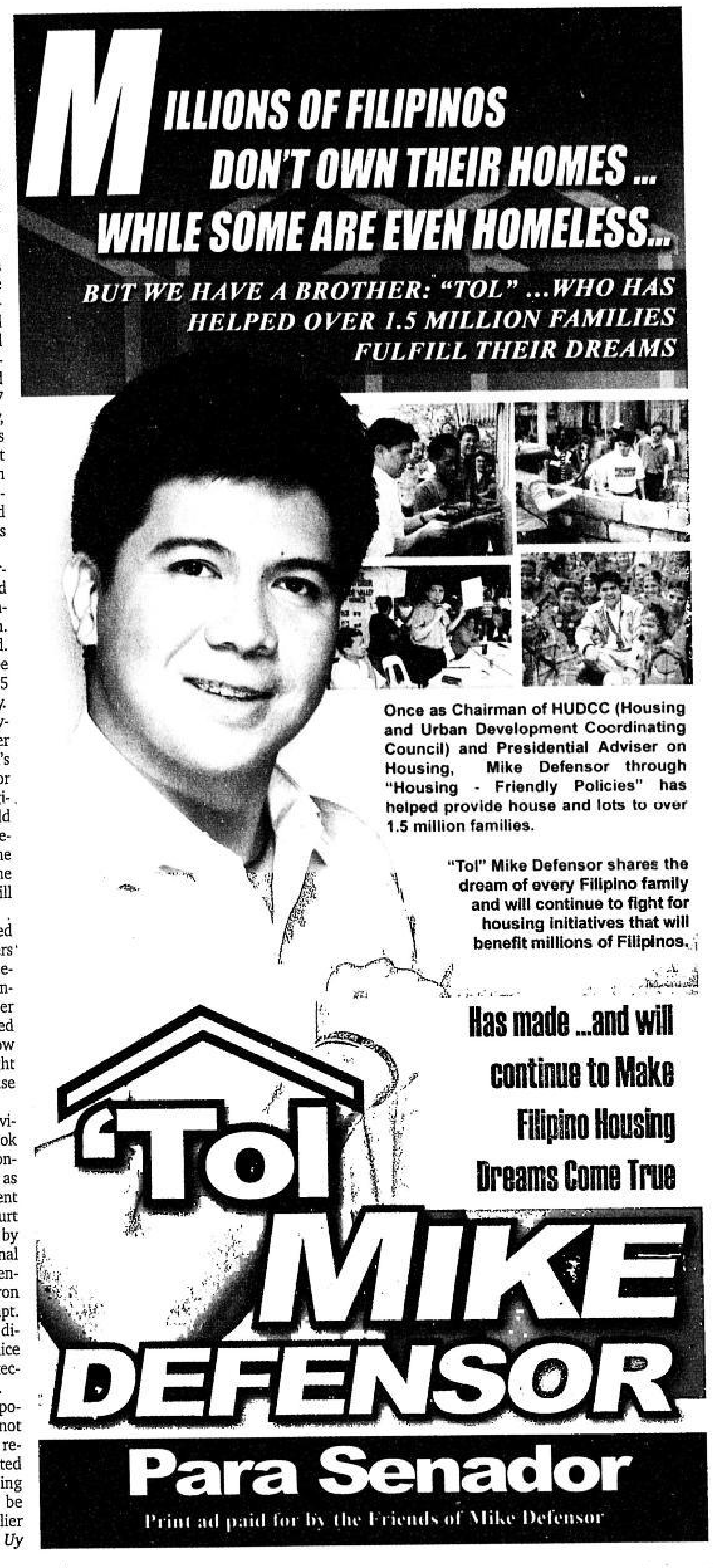
"The Filipino people are at war against corruption, hunger, human rights violations, high prices, poverty. They're at war with the ones responsible [for these]," he said.

Although their new campaign headquarters in the Manila Bank building on Ayala Avenue, Makati City, has been operating for the past three weeks, the official transfer only took place yesterday.

Before the move, GO press briefings were held in the Partido ng Masang Pilipino (PMP) office on Shaw Boulevard, Mandaluyong City.

During the press conference in the new headquarters, they showed a large version of GO's logo with the following words in yellow: "Let's GO: Genuine Opposition."

Osmeña said the color yellow symbolized the "bright future that the Filipino people can look forward to if we can get our act together."



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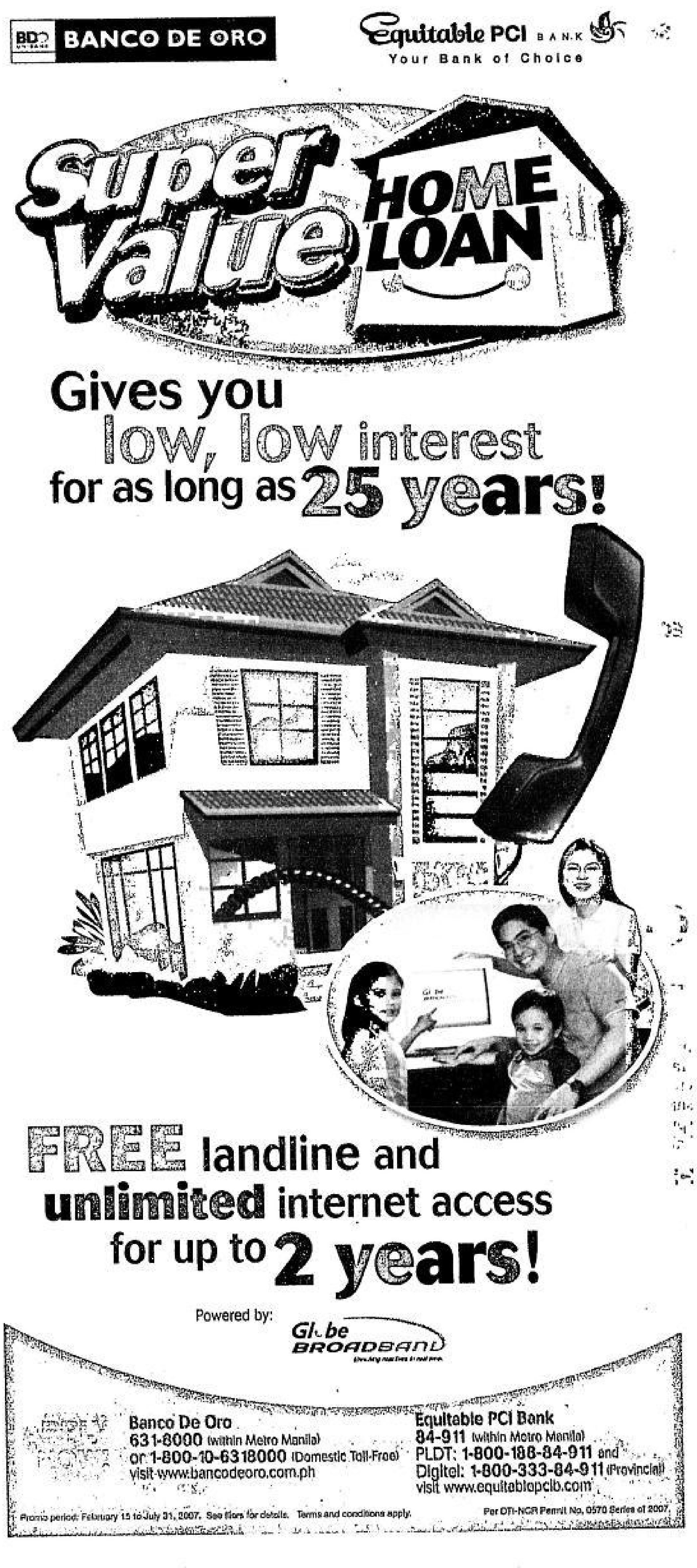

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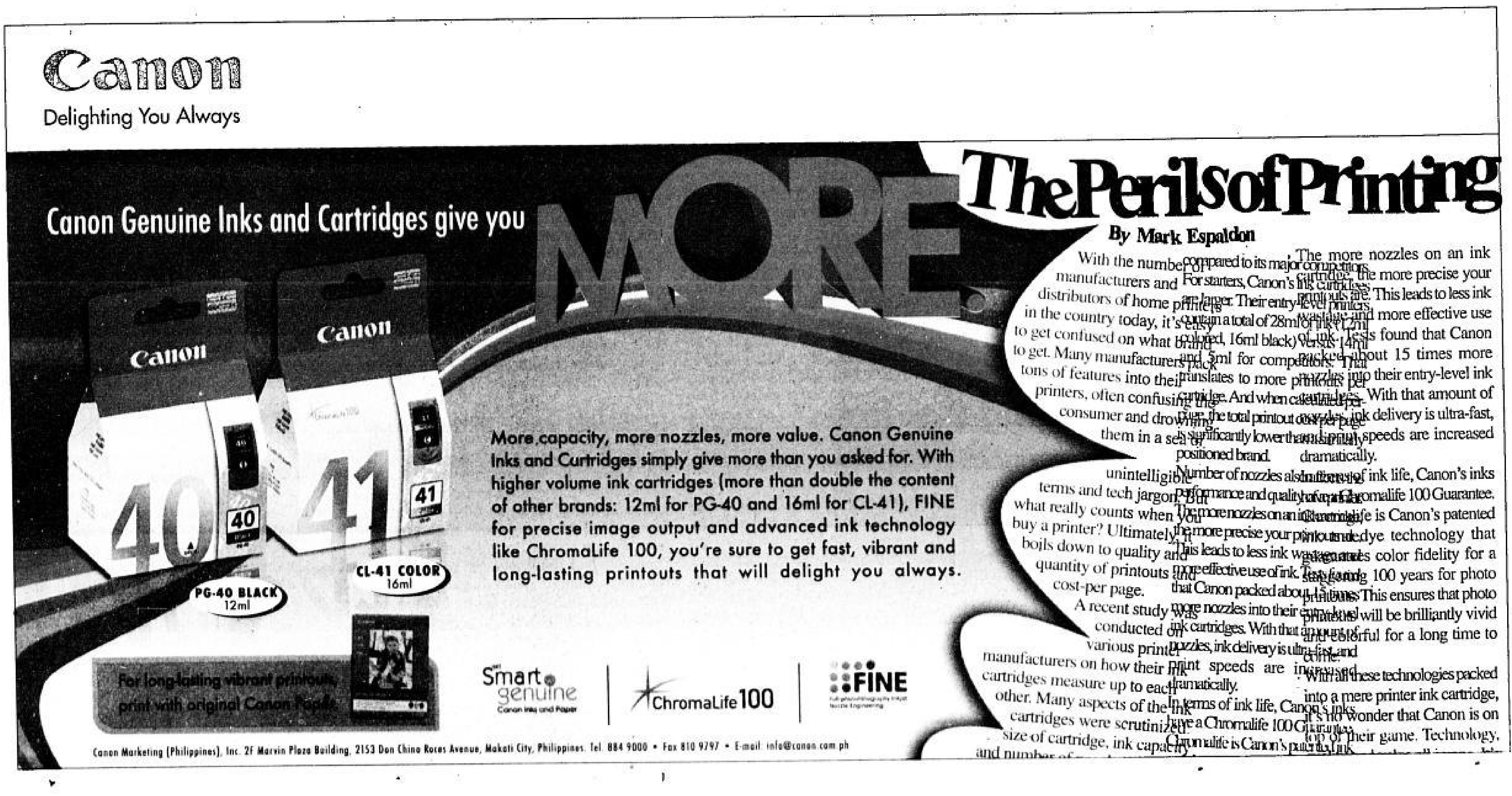

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The Perils of Printing

By Mark Espaldon

With the number of manufacturers and distributors of home printers in the country today, it's easy to get confused on what brand to get. Many manufacturers pack tons of features into their printers, often confusing the consumer and drowning them in a sea of unintelligible terms and tech jargon. But what really counts when you buy a printer? Ultimately, it boils down to quality and quantity of printouts and cost-per page.

A recent study was conducted on various printer manufacturers on how their ink cartridges measure up to each other. Many aspects of the ink cartridges were scrutinized: size of cartridge, ink capacity and number of

compared to its major competitors. For starters, Canon's ink cartridges are larger. Their entry-level printers contain a total of 28ml of ink (12ml colored, 16ml black) versus 14ml and 5ml for competitors. That translates to more printouts per cartridge. And when calculated per page, the total printout cost per page is significantly lower than similarly positioned brand.

Number of nozzles also affects the performance and quality of a printout. The more nozzles on an ink cartridge, the more precise your printouts are. This leads to less ink wastage and more effective use of ink. Tests found that Canon packed about 15 times more nozzles into their entry-level ink cartridges. With that amount of nozzles, ink delivery is ultra-fast, and print speeds are increased dramatically.

In terms of ink life, Canon's inks have a Chromalife 100 Guarantee. Chromalife is Canon's patented ink

The more nozzles on an ink cartridge, the more precise your printouts are. This leads to less ink wastage and more effective use of ink. Tests found that Canon packed about 15 times more nozzles into their entry-level ink cartridges. With that amount of nozzles, ink delivery is ultra-fast, and print speeds are increased dramatically.

In terms of ink life, Canon's inks have a Chromalife 100 Guarantee. Chromalife is Canon's patented ink and dye technology that guarantees color fidelity for a staggering 100 years for photo printouts. This ensures that photo printouts will be brilliantly vivid and colorful for a long time to come.

With all these technologies packed into a mere printer ink cartridge, it's no wonder that Canon is on top of their game. Technology,

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Let them eat cake

EDITORIAL

ONE OUT OF EVERY FIVE FAMILIES NATIONWIDE has experienced involuntary hunger at least once in the past three months, according to a survey by the Social Weather Stations. That translates to some 3.4 million households. Overall hunger remains at a record-high 19 percent of the population, the same figure recorded last November.

In the face of such an incredibly telling figure of mass poverty, all that Malacañang could say is that the poor should stop eating cake. In fact, that seems to be the message of President Macapagal-Arroyo who, despite being a social scientist who's prone to mystifying statistics, seems bent on coming up with mystifying explanations to the sordid portrait of national destitution. Speaking in the rather safe, sanitized perch of the Clark Free Port, the President said that the poor should spend more on essentials rather than luxuries. "I ask our people to spend on the basics first before the luxuries so our children will have enough to eat," she said.

Does that sound insensitive? But if one gave the President the benefit of the doubt, Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye put the matter in more crystal-clear terms: "If you cannot give (your children) milk or proper food, then you should cut down on other expenses." So, the poor are squandering their money on inessentials? Yes, the spokesman said, and he ticked off those unnecessary expenses: "You can cut down on cigarettes and (alcoholic) drinks. Instead of three bottles, one or two would suffice. You can have substantial savings if you cut down on unnecessary expenditures, including text messaging."

Therefore, for the presidential spokesman, the poor don't waste their money alone on cake, they also spend unnecessarily on sin items and text messaging! If the poor are hungry, they're to blame. Hunger is one of the wages of their "sin."

But even sin items are mercilessly taxed. And the fact that finance officials are considering a tax on text messaging should show that as far as the vices of the poor are concerned, government is not only on the take, it abets those same sins that it blames on the poor for the misery of the poor.

But despite all of government's pharisaic claims on the causes of poverty, the fact remains that many Filipinos are hungry and the specter of mass starvation remains felt and real. Not only that, the reality of hunger flies in the face of the President's claim of an economic recovery, credit for which she has been quick to own. Filipinos are experiencing the benefits of an economic boom, the President has said. They just don't know it yet.

Now, that claim should reveal that the President is as much a Cassandra as a Pharisee, but the nation wouldn't get nowhere trying to figure out if she were a creature from biblical times or from the Greek Attic age. What must be addressed is gnawing hunger, and the first step to that is to ensure that the poor get three square meals each day.

As an economist, the President should be the first to appreciate the complexities of economic liberalization. While she strives to reform the economy to make it competitive and investment-friendly, she should also ensure that reforms do not waylay the poor in the name of capital and profit. In short, she should ensure social safety nets to protect the poor.

Of course, she can claim that she has dispatched rolling stores to sell cheap goods to the poor. She can claim she has caused to be made available affordable medicine and goods. This may be true, but what's obviously needed is more of the same. To be sure, all of these measures can hardly relieve hunger and misery of the poor. More are needed.

And if the poor are really spending on the inessentials, in the face of so much privation and indigence, then the President should realize that they do so out of desperation. Poverty that is resilient, intractable and systemic has fostered a sense of despair that's alleviated by false measures such as wasteful spending, gambling and other vices. The nation's growing culture of poverty has bread a culture of despair and escapism.

In the end, widespread hunger betrays the poor condition of freedom and democracy. Because of their poverty, the poor have been consigned to a narrow existence of perennial want and deprivation. How to stop the vicious cycle of constricted opportunities and nearly deterministic scarcity is the challenge facing this government. It is the same challenge that was taken on by the President's own father, Diosdado Macapagal, who said during his time that the task of his administration was to provide "bread and freedom."

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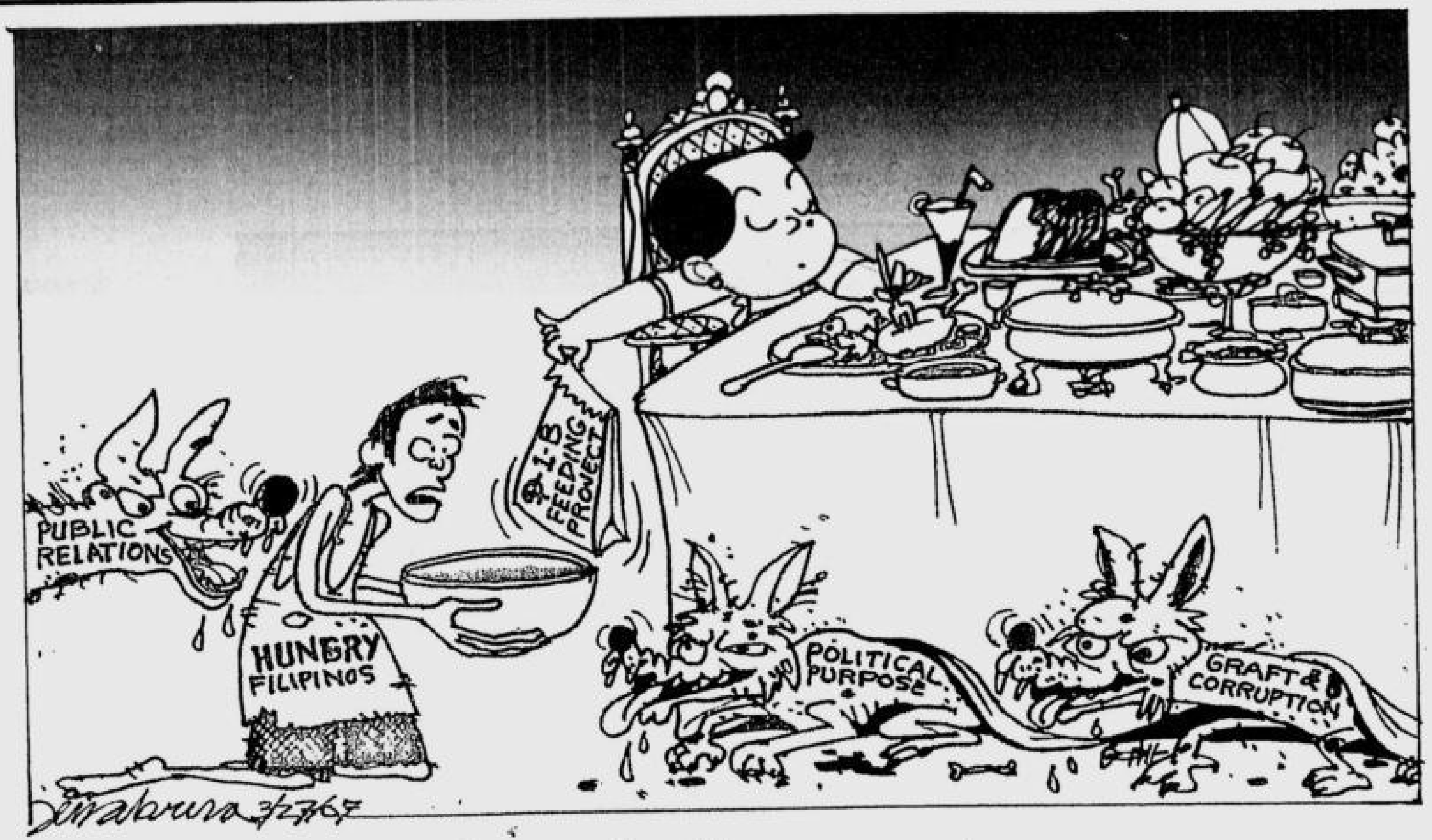

Superb disconnect

VIEWPOINT

Juan L. Mercado

THE DISCONNECT BETWEEN OUR LIVES and what election candidates parrot is obvious in "the most under-appreciated challenge of our times": spreading water shortages.

For World Water Day, the Asia-Pacific Broadcasting Union aired plugs in the Philippines and 54 other countries saying: "Imagine the entire world as a bucket of water. The fresh water that we can use would equal only a spoonful."

Indeed, over 96 percent of this planet's water supply are salt-laced oceans. "Water, water everywhere/Nor any drop to drink," mutters the parched "Ancient Mariner." Now brackish wells and dry irrigation canals signal that this small balance is stressed.

"Due to overpumping of wells, in some coastal areas in Metro Manila seawater intrusion into aquifers is now a serious problem," notes the Philippine Institute for Development Studies. The same threat is growing in Cavite and Iloilo. It "holds for Metro Cebu" where salt has contaminated aquifers three kilometers inland. These are a wrecked legacy for Cebuanos just born.

There's no substitute for water. The body needs a minimum of three liters a day to get by. But more buckets dip into the same wells. There were 19 million Filipinos in 1940, and by 2025, there could be 118.4 million of us.

Signs of scarcity are patent. In Tagum City, residents "import" bottled water from Dumoy, Davao City. In Lapu-Lapu City, water peddlers charge P150 per cubic meter, 10 times those with municipal connections. And in Cebu's mountain barangays, families spend four hours a day drawing water from open wells.

"Water is becoming a critical resource," writes Pacita Barba of the National Water Resources Board. In 29 provinces, a quarter of people, like it or not, must quaff from wells often invaded by E. coli contaminants, notes the Philippine Human Development Report.

Problem provinces include: Apayao, Benguet, Nueva Vizcaya, Capiz, Bukidnon, North Cotabato, Ilocos Norte, Kalinga, Guimaras, Zamboanga del Norte, Bohol, Quezon, Masbate, Occidental and Oriental Misamis, Camarines Norte, Agusan del Sur, Leyte, Negros Oriental and Occidental, and the entire Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao.

Globally, diarrhea kills more people than TB or malaria, World Health Organization data show. "Montezuma's Revenge" is what they dub the disease. It floors 1,997 per 100,000 population, mostly in poor areas here. Diarrhea kills more than communist pogroms, rogue soldiers or vigilantes in Davao and Cebu lumped together.

Most victims are children under five. Voiceless, they can't demand that candidates and officials face up to the consequences of water and sanitation deficits. These spill across generations. "Repeated bouts of diarrhea ... are associated with disadvantages that stretch from cradle to grave," the UN report adds. Victims experience weight loss, stunting, vitamin deficiency, etc. It also results in "cognitive infirmities."

"The challenge of 21st-century water governance may prove to be among the most daunting faced in human history," says the UN's new study, "Power, Poverty and the Global Water Crisis." And in the triennial report, "Water: A Shared Responsibility," the Fourth World Water Forum in Mexico City was reminded: "Governance systems determine who gets water, when and how... But mismanagement, corruption, bureaucratic inertia interlock in the emerging water crisis."

To raise a ton of rice, you need a thousand gallons of water. Industry and municipal use accounts for a gallon and a half out of every 10 pumped up. Seven is funneled into irrigation, mostly for food production, which would be crippled if water supplies falter.

Parched irrigation systems in critical food baskets, like Central Luzon, crimp harvests in a country where rainfall of 2.36 is unevenly distributed. Southern Tagalog has the most fresh water available; Western Visayas, the least.

Despite declining fertility, population will still surge. "Food demand is expected to double," the Food and Agriculture Organization notes. So, will demand for water. "This puts huge pressure on fresh water systems not only for agriculture, but other competing needs, including clean water for human use, timber, biodiversity. Already, 30 percent of irrigated lands are degraded."

"Political leaders vastly underestimate the influence of water scarcity on food production, natural systems and stability," the WorldWatch Institute's Sandra Postel notes. "Some unpleasant surprises may lie in store for them."

For the future, policy reforms must curb running down of water assets. Water bankruptcy spawns "water lords" like those of Gujarat, India. As in Pakistan and China, unsustainable water mining caused water tables to drop and inflated costs of pumping and digging wells.

Within a coherent plan, government must: (a) regulate groundwater extraction; (b) make polluters pay; (c) price water realistically; (d) make it profitable to conserve water and reward efficient use. But few candidates bother.

The alternative is Cebu City's "total denial" model. Cebu overdraws twice the amount its limited aquifers can recharge. And deep wells are conking out. Demand is relentlessly doubling, from 68 million cubic meters today to 137 million cubic meters in 2030. Investments for water are patchy. What water problem? asks Mayor Tomas Osmeña.

Burying one's head in the sand is superb disconnect. To paraphrase Nobel Laureate Gabriel Garcia Marquez's comment : When the rich were dying (from thirst), they were amazed how they looked just like the poor.

(E-mail: juanlmercado@gmail.com)

We're back to martial law, part II

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

AFTER SATUR OCAMPO CAME THE INQUIRER publisher and editors.

Barely had the authorities rested from their labors in arresting the chief representative of this country's leading party-list, Bayan Muna, than they were up and about arresting the editors of this country's leading newspaper, the Philippine Daily Inquirer.

"It was the first time the justice system worked so fast," INQUIRER publisher Isagani Yambot would say wryly later on. If that statement needs editing, it is only in that it was not the first time justice (of the kind the justice secretary is known for) worked so fast, it was the second, and in less than a week. The first time was in the case of Ocampo. Justice worked so fast there the authorities even got ahead of the judge who was saying Ocampo need not be brought to Leyte.

But the INQUIRER case was certainly the first time the authorities acted with mind-boggling dispatch in a case of libel. So swiftly did they detain its publisher and editors they did not even inform them that the court had resolved against them and issued a warrant for their arrest. It was the first time the publisher and editors of a newspaper dedicated to out-scooping the opposition were horrendously out-scooped. Their detention came as complete news to them, in the unnerving sense of the word. This wasn't balanced news and fearless views, this was unbalanced thinking and fearful acting.

The detention of the INQUIRER editors, as everyone knows by now, stemmed from Mike Arroyo's libel suit against them for articles that appeared in this newspaper unflattering to him. Normally, before the judge could issue an arrest warrant, INQUIRER staffers would already have posted bail upon being notified of the court resolution to preempt that pass. The INQUIRER never received such notification, at least not until after the editors had already been detained. Snail mail had nothing to do with it. Stale bale had everything to do with it.

"From what we gathered," said INQUIRER lawyer Ato Pagdanganan, "when the resolution was released, the next day the warrant of arrest was issued. Normally it takes five days for it. You have to study the case well and assess if there is probable cause." What, the judge figured the "suspects" would skip town he had to have them reeled in posthaste? What, the judge figured the "suspects" would be exiled by the INQUIRER to San Francisco to escape his wrath the way GMA sent her husband abroad to escape the public's wrath?

The latter quite incidentally, though a non-sequitur response to the "Hello Garci" scandal (the public detested her more than her husband) offers ironclad proof that the First Gentleman is a public figure. If he weren't, why should his existence be of any concern to government, least of all to his wife?

Instead of being summoned in court, Gani Yambot and the editors were ordered to go to Station 10 in Pandacan to "voluntarily surrender." Once in the station, they had to wait for half an hour for the judge to order their release and another half hour to fill out the release forms. The ordeal took only an hour, but an hour is an eternity to the innocent. No, an hour is utter hell to those who are being punished for a lofty calling. I understand that my friend Jorge Aruta, the opinion editor, was feeling an onset of gout at the time. I can swear to the fact that an hour is an eternity of utter hell in that state.

It would all be very funny, except that it's not. Only Mike Arroyo and his minions will see the joke. I empathized completely with Totoy Sarmiento when he raised a clenched fist on his way out. Another gesture, the one that has to do with the middle finger, might have been more appropriate. But it also might not have ended as a front-page photo in this newspaper. Unlike their accuser, the INQUIRER publisher and editors believe in using power responsibly. More than that, unlike their accuser, the INQUIRER publisher and editors like to be classy.

But it's the clearest sign democracy is dying, if not already dead, in this country. The Bill of Rights might as well not be there. You can assemble peaceably to protest government, but only under government's definition of peaceable. Your home is your castle, but only until Jovito Palparan and ilk think you are squatting in it. You may speak your mind freely, and have it blown away just as freely if you are a journalist or political activist living in the province.

And now this. Doing this to the leading members of the leading newspaper of this country is clearly meant to send a warning, or, hell, issue a threat, to the journalists of this country to look at what would happen to them if they continued to believe—and say—that the President is a cheat and her husband is a crook. I've been saying again and again that unless we protested shrilly the iniquities that were happening outside of the capital—the killings in particular—those iniquities would descend on the capital, and soon. They have.

I say now that unless we protest shrilly the injustice that has been done to Satur Ocampo and the publisher and editors of the INQUIRER, injustice will rule the day—or fast—descending night. To imagine that Ocampo is just a leftist and the INQUIRER is just the competition what happened to them cannot possibly happen to us is to guarantee it will happen to us. Take it from the Lutheran pastor Martin Niemoller's famous words about the Holocaust:

"First they came for the Jews and I didn't speak up because I was a Christian. Then they came for the trade unionists and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a trade unionist. And then they came for the Catholics and I didn't speak up because I was a Protestant.

"And then they came for me, and there was no one, no one left to speak up."

Unlike rabble-rousers, Zubiri has solid bill

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

FORMER SEN. JOHN OSMEÑA WAS QUOTED recently as saying that the Genuine Opposition (GO) team is having a hard time organizing activities in the provinces due to the lack of opposition leaders at the grassroots. This is true in most places and the crucial role of political machinery may be one reason why Team Unity (TU) in the end may score far better in the senatorial race than GO, despite the opposition candidates' popularity. The importance of local support was best demonstrated during the recent TU proclamation rally in Davao City, whose big success was attributed to the team-up of Mayor Rudy Duterte and House Majority Leader Prospero Nograles. The two-hour rally, attended by a crowd estimated to be between 12,000 to 25,000, was carried by Channel 28 and replayed nightly for one week. The two veteran politicos' team-up for the local elections is said to be unprecedented in Davao.

* * *

Star columnist Domini Torrevillas pointed out that for all their noise and rabble-rousing, Representatives Alan Peter Cayetano and Francis Escudero have failed in all their nine years in the House to file their own bill. Instead they were content to affix their signatures as co-authors of bills their colleagues initiated. She said the two were busy getting media mileage for their scathing attacks against the administration and projecting themselves as the "next generation of leaders." By contrast, Bukidnon Rep. Migz Zubiri had been busy putting together his landmark Biofuels Act that was signed into law late last year. Indeed, Zubiri has been catching a number of media folks' eye with his environmental crusade.

* * *

US Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for East Asia and Pacific Affairs Eric John is reportedly coming next month to look deeper into the unsolved killings in the country. Sources in Washington, who followed the hearing conducted two weeks ago by the East Asia and Pacific Affairs subcommittee of the US Senate's Foreign Relations Committee, note that John seemed to be the only voice at that hearing sympathetic to the Philippine government. Reports say the sub-committee chair, Democratic Sen. Barbara Boxer, who had summoned only left-wing witnesses, initially didn't want to call John. To her query as to whether US military aid to RP should be tied to the killings, John said it would be disastrous to do so. His visit should ensure that the US government's views on this issue would be more balanced than what Baxter wanted to give.

* * *

During the recently concluded conference conducted by the Department of Foreign Affairs with all Philippine ambassadors and select consuls-general in Makati last week, I was able to obtain from Ambassador to Washington Willy Gaa a copy of his statement submitted into the records of the US sub-committee. It detailed all the steps taken by the government to solve the killings judiciously and I noted that even the statements issued by UN Special Rapporteur Philip Alston and the Melo Commission cited in his report seemed more fair than in most media accounts.

* * *

Gaa pointed out that the Melo Commission had concluded that "there is no direct evidence, but only circumstantial evidence, linking some elements in the military to the killings" and neither is there "official or sanctioned policy on the part of the military or its civilian superiors to resort to ... illegal liquidations." Despite this conclusion, Gaa noted that President Macapagal-Arroyo still instructed the Departments of Justice and National Defense last January to coordinate with the Commission on Human Rights in constituting a joint fact-finding body. On the other hand, the AFP issued last month a directive to all levels of command, threatening to hold any AFP officer accountable for neglect of duty if he failed to report a crime or offense committed by subordinates.

Gaa also noted that last Feb. 13 the AFP General Headquarters created the AFP Human Rights Office (AFPHRO), with orders to plan, implement and supervise programs to protect and promote respect for human rights and international rights laws, and monitor the litigation of cases against the AFP. At present, the AFPHRO is investigating 94 cases of alleged political killings where security forces "are probably involved," which are among the 240 and 113 cases the Melo Commission and the DILG-created Task Force Usig, respectively, had recommended for investigation. Gaa also noted that the President had requested the Supreme Court to establish special courts to try unexplained political killings, while the DOJ has sought to strengthen its Witness Protection Program by liberalizing admission requirements. More on Gaa's statement.

* * *

While our most prominent election lawyers have vigorously fought each other in behalf of their respective clients, they are united on the issue of corrupt judges who sell election results for a fee, or to promote electoral reforms. Tomorrow, March 28 starting at 8:30 a.m. election lawyers Romulo Macalintal, Sixto Brilliantes, Pete Quadra, Leila de Lima and Alberto Agra will jointly conduct a lecture on election laws and rules and regulations at the Century Blossoms Hotel in Manila. A fee of P5,000 will be charged per participant to cover snacks and lunch, but it should be worth while as they will provide an update on the latest practice and jurisprudence on elections, how to prevent cheating, rules in ballot-appreciation, etc., with actual demonstration of the process and paraphernalia step by step. This is a "lecture for a cause," as the lawyers are waiving their professional fees and donating the proceeds to the Diocese of Parañaque for the construction of its diocesan house. For more details, call Lourdes Panganiban at 0917-858-9961 or Al Saba 0906-497-1262.

Eleven commandments for 'green' voters

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

A LONG-TIME ADVOCATE OF ENVIRONMENTAL causes, Manila Archbishop Gaudencio Cardinal Rosales has dared break his political silence by urging voters to vote for "green candidates."

"It is imperative for voters, as stewards of God's creation, to ask and discern who among those aspiring for public offices are truly committed in caring for Mother Nature and in defending her from being desecrated, contaminated and destroyed by apathy, greed, crass materialism, toxic wastes and chemicals, and the unsustainable use of the earth's dwindling resources," the cardinal said in a statement.

He threw his support behind the ongoing campaign of the EcoWaste Coalition and other green groups to inform Filipino voters on how to select candidates, both national and local, who will fight for the environment. As part of the campaign, the group drafted the "Ten Commandments on How to Choose Green Candidates" with inputs from the Add Up Youth Environmental Group, Bangon Kalikasan Movement, Concerned Citizens against Pollution, Ecological Society of the Philippines, Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives, Greenpeace Southeast Asia, Health Care Without Harm, Miriam PEACE, Mother Earth Foundation, Sagip Bukid as well as from Maitet Diokno-Pascual.

Cardinal Rosels described the "Ten Commandments" as "providing useful guidance on what to ask and look for from candidates in terms of environmental track record and platform."

Along with the "Ten Commandments for Responsible Voting" released by the Parish Pastoral Council for Responsible Voting (PPCRV), the 10-point Guidelines will certainly assist voters in making informed choices that will benefit both democracy and the environment, added the cardinal.

* * *

HERE are the "Ten Commandments" on green voting:

1. Thou shall not vote for candidates using the 4Gs to win: Guns, Goons, Gold, Garbage. Vote for candidates who stand for the essential Ms in the genuine exercise of the right of suffrage: Malinis, Maayos, Matipid, Mapanindigan, Marangal, Mapayapa, Makatao, Maka-Kalikasan, Maka-Diyos. Support candidates known for their simple, pro-people and ecological lifestyle.

2. Thou shall not support candidates who nail, staple, strap or plaster campaign materials on defenseless trees and other restricted sites. Vote for candidates who plant and love trees, use the least amount of campaign materials and abide by the campaign rules.

3. Thou shall not pick candidates who use smoke-belching vehicles that contribute to worsening air quality. Go for candidates on bicycles rather than those who come in a convoy of cars. Vote for those who use fewer vehicles in motorcades to reduce fuel consumption and car emissions.

4. Thou shall not fall for candidates who make beautiful speeches about their love for the people and the environment, but fail to match their words with deeds. Does the candidate walk his talk? Check if she/he is engaged in any environmental advocacy or project, or has financial interest in any polluting or environmentally-destructive business. Vote for those who live by what they say.

5. Thou shall not select candidates who profess to protect the environment, but are mute on what they intend to do. Ask the candidates, point-blank, how they intend to serve the interest of the environment. Vote for those who will work earnestly to heal and protect the environment.

* * *

6. THOU shall not choose candidates who are hooked to the outmoded "hakot-tambak-sunog" and fail to shut down illegal dumps. Vote for those who segregate their discards at home and in the work place and support ecological, low-cost and community-driven alternatives to dumps, landfills and incinerators.

7. Thou shall not vote for candidates who ignore the health, environmental, socio-economic and human rights concerns against "sanitary" landfills, "waste-to-energy," dams and similar infrastructure plans. Vote for candidates who will assert the people's sovereign rights to a clean, safe and healthy environment. Go for candidates who will work for sustainable economy that will respond to people's basic needs and not to the dictates of the World Bank and other international funding institutions.

8. Thou shall not elect candidates who want to build big dams and allow mining, logging and other extractive industries to rape our land and abuse human rights, especially the rights of our indigenous peoples. Vote for those who will take up the cudgels for the human as well as non-human victims, such as trees, plants and wildlife, of environmentally-damaging human activities.

9. Thou shall not back candidates who will not take action against the health and safety threats of genetically modified crops and food products. Vote for candidates who will advance the people's right to safe and healthy food as well as food production systems that nurture the earth.

10. Thou shall not vote for candidates who refuse to acknowledge global warming. Vote for candidates who see the need for preventive and precautionary actions to stop climate change. For instance, go for candidates who oppose new coal power projects and support community-owned utilities using renewable energy sources.

* * *

I MIGHT as well add, because the cardinal certainly won't, an 11th commandment for "green" voters: Thou shall support candidates who believe population growth is an important environmental issue, and that respecting the right of couples to plan the size of their families as well as to act on these decisions is the best way to honor life and acknowledge the role unmanaged population growth has played in creating pressures on the environment. And thou shall not vote for candidates who presume to tell people how they are to decide on such matters.

Enhancing industry-academe linkages

(*Conclusion*)

(The following are excerpts from remarks delivered at the 2nd National Congress of the Coordinating Council for Private Education Associations.)

COMMENTARY

Ramon R. del Rosario Jr.

LINKAGES BETWEEN INDUSTRY AND THE academe can be quite extensive. For instance, Yazaki Torres partnered with the Laurel family to set up the Lyceum Institute of Technology in Sto.Tomas, Batangas, right across from the company's plant. Having an institution of higher learning right across its place of business guarantees Yazaki Torres a steady flow of capable graduates to satisfy its employment needs. On the other hand, the partnership assures Lyceum of cutting edge and relevant content.

Research is one more area of collaboration. Educational institutions and companies work together on topics of interest to both parties. Quite often, companies direct the subject of research, provide the financing, and sometimes assist in the actual research by lending people, laboratories, or even the object of research (e.g., markets, communities, etc.)

These approaches are all based on the separation of the world of work and the world of learning. Exploiting one world or the other requires the temporary transfer of resources, people, or time between one world and the other.

However, the boundaries between these two worlds may be getting somewhat hazy. The demands of the times are changing the order of things. Animation companies recruit fresh out of high school, sometimes preferring raw, untrained talent to college graduates. Call centers, needing only English proficiency while not requiring a college diploma or advanced professional knowledge, are hiring college sophomores. Meanwhile, global software companies prefer college graduates with at least two years of actual programming work experience.

According to a survey done by the Department of Education, more than 50 percent of high school graduates are not interested in pursuing college degrees. More likely, they want to look for a job in order to begin earning a living immediately.

The market needs employees, the youth want employment. Four or five years to put work on hold to study Shakespeare and algebra, auditing and ballistics, thermodynamics and teachings strategies, to these impatient youth may seem too long a time to wait. In those four to five years, a new computer chip would have probably been invented, a new operating system developed, a new disease discovered, and new accounting standards established.

I firmly believe that in this ever increasingly complex world, education and higher learning are even more important and necessary. However, perhaps the time has come to think about recreating the way we learn and do away with traditional divides. Might it not make sense to consider making the workplace a source of learning and bringing the classrooms to places of work?

Graduate schools of business all over the world have adapted to these changes in the market. MBA programs keep on getting shorter and shorter because companies cannot afford to have their managers disappear for two years anymore. Neither can managers afford to be out of the workplace for that long lest they get left behind.

It is these models of integration that we must begin to envision. Schools could set up classrooms in companies for their young call center hires; or call centers could set up sites in universities. Maybe, 8- to 10-year college degrees could become acceptable with two to three years of guided work experience as part of those years.

I realize I raise more questions than I answer. Times—and the world—have changed.

When we are willing to re-imagine the world's working and learning, it is only then that we might manage to satisfy the needs of our youth while at the same time filling the requirements of industry.

Let me end with two suggestions:

First, we can encourage the formation of panels of learning specialists and experts from industry and the academe to study the possibilities.

Second, to develop a sector responsive to the times, we must be given the freedom to experiment and transform when necessary. Therefore, we must push for the deregulation of the sector.

Along these lines, let me share with you a recent development in the business community. Mid-2006, a number of very concerned chief executive officers banded together and organized PBEd, Philippine Business for Education. Our goal is clear: Together with education experts we will advocate policy and institutional reforms needed to make the Philippine education system competitive, effective and efficient, universal and inclusive. Our youth need the best opportunities possible to improve the quality of their lives. For this to happen, the entire education system must change.

Ramon R. del Rosario Jr. is president and CEO of Phinma and chair of Philippine Business for Education.

The chicken that crossed the road

YOUNG BLOOD

Juan Fidel F. Nograles

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—**Ed.**

BEING A 1986 EDSA BABY, MY PET NAME IS AYAN BOY, from the word *"bayan."* Actually, I was christened Juan Fidel, after two key players of the Edsa Revolution: Juan Ponce Enrile and Fidel V. Ramos.

I am now in third-year college, and I am trying to drop Ayan Boy in favor of a simple Fidel. Ayan Boy simply connotes *totoy*, and now that I measure 6'3", I feel uncomfortable answering to such a boyish moniker. But let me add that shedding Ayan Boy does not only mean abandoning a boy "thing." I want to be called Fidel because I think the name reflects the real me.

I came to realize this after going through a rite of passage that became a turning point in my life. This was how I found the true Fidel I am supposed to be.

Let me go back a little. Back in my early grade-school years, I was one of the favorite objects of class bullies. I never really fought back for the simple reason that I was a self-confessed chicken. I was afraid to get hurt. I had witnessed several instances when bullies would menacingly grab a frail kid's collar and thunder, *"Kanin o kamao!"* (Your food or a fist), to force him to surrender his precious *baon* in his lunchbox. There was really no way to avoid their intimidation because reporting them to the teacher would just attract other more atrocious bullies. So I had no other choice but to quietly give in to their coercive demands and surrender my *baon*.

My fear of the bullies was really a fear of stepping out of my comfort zone, a fear of pain. I was raised in a relatively calm, quiet and peaceful home. Hence, the presence of these pesky bullies in school caused a disequilibrium in my otherwise sedate existence. To be able to retreat peacefully to my conflict-free existence, I had to give in to the bullies. And this went on until I encountered my first farm camp experience in Davao.

During the summer break after my seventh grade, I took a short vacation at a farm in Davao where my uncle, a cockfight aficionado, raised fighting cocks. One morning, I was suddenly awakened by a familiar sound which I had longed to hear for some time: the thud of a bouncing basketball against a concrete floor. I rushed to the window and saw five young, lanky lads about my age, half-naked, wearing tattered shorts and worn-out *smagol*(rubber slippers). They were alternately shooting hoops on a makeshift court in the backyard.

I hurried to put on my rubber shoes and decided to join them in what I expected to be a friendly game. They gladly welcomed me. For a second, I wondered why they were all grinning from ear to ear. The answer came all too soon as Pards, a diminutive but lean and muscled boy, passed me the ball that landed like a missile on my stomach. My knees weakened instantly, but I gave no hint of it. Then as I attempted a jump shot, another boy came flying from nowhere and smashed his elbow against my jaw and snatched the ball away from my hands

I was appalled by the boys' extremely rough and highly physical manner of playing the sport. Obviously, they only cared for the *balyahan*-style of street basketball that violated every rule of the game I learned by heart from a Milo basketball camp. When I asked for a foul, they would give me a quizzical look. And then they casually went about their basketball routine, merrily elbowing my nose, tripping my feet, and ramming their bodies against mine. Heck, they were not playing basketball with me. They were clobbering me. No. They were bullying this young Manila boy to submission.

But there was no *baon* to surrender; it was just me and my manhood on the line. For some strange reason, at that particular moment, I became intensely determined to stand up for myself. It was not just out of embarrassment. There was something in me that shouted, "It's now or never!"

I heeded that call and decided it was time to play hard ball. Why then and why there is really very hard to explain. Maybe it had something to do with being pushed too hard against the wall. Anyway, with the theme of "Rocky" playing in my ears, I mustered all my energy, summoned every single muscle and adrenaline in my body, and pleaded with all my guardian angels not to fail me this time. "Let's get ready to rumble!" I repeated to myself, trying to psyche myself for battle.

What ensued was a brawl. After which, my lips were swollen, my nose was bleeding and I was limping. But I swear I never felt better. I had done it! Finally, I was able to break out from my protective cocoon beset by irrational fears. What was there to fear? Gashed brows and broken bones? Nah, they heal in time.

After learning about the incident, my uncle was quick to apologize for the boys whom he referred to as the "Texas Boys" after the fierce breed of fighting cock. But we both laughed it off as if we had just finished some outrageously playful game. He advised me to expose myself more often to rough play. That was how he trained his young fighting cocks for *sabong*(cockfighting), he said. He allowed his best fighting cocks to inflict severe harm on defenseless young chickens during a practice match until they were forced to fight back on instinct. This was how they gradually developed their skills. In every learning process, he reminded me, the principle is always no pain, no gain.

When I got back to school, the bullies never bothered me again. I could not say exactly why. Maybe it was the confidence I exuded. Or maybe the bullies had undergone an awakening and decided to mend their ways. Whatever the case may be, I was not about to pick fights or get into brawls. That's so Ayan Boy.

I am prepared to face life's challenges, to take a leap into the unknown, beyond my comfort zone. This is because the chicken has crossed the road. Finally, I have become Fidel, which means means faith. I have learned to believe in myself and in what I can do, and can be. I believe that nothing is impossible.

Now, nobody calls me Ayan Boy anymore. (Except my Mom, when she feels like cuddling me, but I guess that's ok.)

Juan Fidel F. Nograles, 20, is a third-year management economics student at the Ateneo de Manila University.

NOTICE TO YOUNGBLOOD CONTRIBUTORS:

Send your contributions by e-mail to youngblood@inquirer.com.ph together with your address, age and the school, course and year you're enrolled in or, if employed, the position you're holding and the company you work with. Contributions to Youngblood should not have been previously published.

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Strange palace claim of 'improving economy'

MALACAÑANG HAILED THE "IMPROving economy" (INQUIRER, 3/16/07), citing an NSO (National Statistics Office) survey finding that "nine out of every 10 people were employed." Good news, indeed. If only it were true.

Our Center for Women's Resources, founded in 1982, is a research and training institute for women. Every year, we conduct a study to provide our partners and other institutions a report on the women situation. We also have NSO as a source. We have starkly contrary findings; that is why we find the Palace report curious.

How can the Arroyo administration explain the 1.03 million women who, according to the same source, the NSO, are unemployed? How about the increasing number of unpaid and own-account workers, most of whom are women? (Own-account workers include Filipinos who resort to the underground economy—e.g., street stalls, small village shops—when they are out of work or are seeking to supplement low salaries.) The government may explain these data with its new definition of the word "unemployed" which now excludes those who are "not actively seeking work." But no matter how government tries to manipulate the figures with the new definition, still, almost three million Filipinos are unemployed, and 36.4 percent of them are women.

Under the old definition of unemployed, there are now 4.4 million Filipinos with no job. This means an 11.7-percent unemployment rate. Counting in the 12.4 million underemployed (working less than eight hours), there are now 16.8 million Filipinos (45 percent of the labor force) who can hardly find work in the country.

The government also overlooked the high 18.44-percent "separation rate" in the wholesale and retail trade and in the hotel and restaurant industry. These industries mostly employ women. "Separation" refers to the termination of employment. A large number of such terminations involve "contractuals."

The labor force is growing at 3.5 percent per year. According to government statistics, from May 2004 to April 2005, close to 700,000 jobs were created; and from May 2005 to April 2006, around 807,000. This means that with an annual 1.5-million job creation target, the government had a total backlog of 1.493 million in the two-year period referred to.

No wonder, an average of 3,000 Filipinos leave the country every day. Out of 10 Filipinos who leave, seven are women who mostly work as domestic helpers, entertainers or hospital workers.

These hard facts show that the Arroyo administration's thrust to create jobs has been slow in an economy driven by OFW remittances and foreign borrowings. I wonder then how Malacañang's latest NSO employment data could be taken as an indicator of an "improving economy"?

—MARY JOAN A. GUAN,
executive director,
Center for Women's Resources,
127-B Scout Fuentebella St.,
Kamuning, Quezon City

DPWH not involved in Pantao Port project

THIS PERTAINS TO THE NEWS ITEM written by Norman Bordadora, titled, "2 Bicol lawmakers linked to P250-M port scam." (INQUIRER, 3/16/07)

According to DPWH-Region 5 Dir. Orlando Roces, the Department of Public Works and Highways has nothing to do with the construction of the Pantao Port, and has not implemented any road project (leading to that port) which was alleged in the news report as already "pulverized."

Director Roces said that if not for the dredging undertaken before Typhoon Reming, which registered eight continuous hours of 466-ml rainfall, the damage could have been worse.

—ELIZABETH P. PILORIN,
OIC-chief,
Public Information Division,
Department of Public Works
and Highways

Administration playing dirty politics

THE ARREST WARRANT ISSUED AGAINST Bayan Muna Rep. Satur Ocampo and the harassment of progressive party-lists like Anakpawis and Gabriela are more of the dirty tactics of the administration, which is trying hard to discredit its staunchest critics and stop them from gaining a seat in Congress.

It is alarming to note how quickly an arrest warrant was issued against Ocampo for a crime allegedly committed 20 years ago and how the Philippine National Police went all out to serve the warrant, while we have yet to see them exhibiting the same zeal and dedication in bringing justice for the victims of extrajudicial killings.

The case against Ocampo is also part of the administration's effort to shift the blame for the extrajudicial killings on the Left and away from the Armed Forces of the Philippines, which is generally perceived to be behind the murders. Instead of answering the report of both the Melo Commission and UN rapporteur Philip Alston, the AFP has once again turned to using their time-worn tactic of blaming the victims of the killings and human rights abuses as the perpetrators. They point to a purge that has occurred 20 years ago and then show questionable and unreliable "evidence."

The harassment of Ka Satur by the PNP and of party-list members in urban communities by the AFP, as well as the continued detention of Crispin Beltran, only proves the government's lack of sincerity in promoting democracy.

What the arrest warrant also shows is how dirty the administration plays politics. If it believes in the capabilities of its candidates and administration-supported party-lists, let it play clean in its efforts to win the people's trust—something that Bayan Muna and other progressive party-lists have in past elections.

—RON VILLEGAS,
information officer,
League of Filipino Students,
10-C Speaker Perez St., Quezon City

Why did DFA junk passport project that would entail no cost to gov't?

THIS REFERS TO THE STORY ON THE TRO (temporary restraining order) issued by the Supreme Court in relation to the Machine Readable Passport/Visa (MRP/V) Project. (INQUIRER, 3/16/07)

In the interest of truth and justice, allow us to present the facts and issues involved.

First, why does the Department of Foreign Affairs insist on spending P2 billion of public money for the ePassport Project when private funding is available through the MRP/V-BOT?

On May 10, 2005, the DFA MRP/V Advisory Board, in a memorandum submitted to Foreign Affairs Secretary Alberto Romulo, recommended (1) the approval of the Central Site Facility and (2) the use of the 2D BarCode.

"On the basis of the inspection and evaluation report of the PMT and Questronics that the site satisfies the minimum requirements of the project, the Advisory Board, in its meeting held on 05 May 2005 decided to recommend to the Secretary the approval of the Star Mall Annex as the Central Facility Site of the MRP/V Project," the memorandum stated.

On the MRP with 2D Barcode, it said: "In view of the recent findings from countries that the use of the electronic chips necessitates further study, the Advisory Board opined that the Department should maintain the use of the 2D Bar Code Biometric storage medium and seek the upgrade to ePassport within 3 years' time from the implementation of the project in accordance with the original terms of the Amended BOT Contract."

The memo emphasized that "The Advisory Board believes that should the Secretary gives his approval to the foregoing recommendation before 25 May 2005, there is a possibility that the first machine readable passports will be issued before the year's end. Likewise the positive action of the Secretary will enable the proponent to proceed with the project."

The DFA sat on this set of recommendations despite the glaring fact that the MRP/V Project would have been in operation by the end of 2005 at no cost to the government and the Filipino taxpayers.

We believe that certain personalities in the DFA prevented Secretary Romulo from making the right decision. The task at hand is to ferret out these people and to file graft charges against them.

In closing, there is no need to undertake the ePassport Project, much less spend P2 billion of taxpayer money just to enrich a few suppliers and corrupt DFA officials.

—ADERITO YUHUICO,
chair, BCA International

US group vows support for activists

WE, IN THE FIRST QUARTER STORM Network(FQSN)-USA, condemn in the strongest terms possible the arrest of Satur Ocampo on trumped-up charges. As activists in the Philippines before and during martial law, we are appalled by the witch-hunt and the anti-communist crusade that the US-Arroyo regime has been pushing against progressive individuals like Ocampo and party-list organizations like Anakpawis, Bayan Muna, Gabriela, Kabataan, Suara Bangsamoro and others.

We express our militant solidarity with our compatriots who are now being persecuted in the Philippines and we vow that we will campaign tirelessly for their speedy release and freedom. *Makibaka, Huwag matakot!*

—PONS DE LEON,
337 Glendale Blvd.,
Los Angeles, CA 90026, USA

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GSIS Advisory

TO OUR OLD-AGE PENSIONERS

The Government Service Insurance System (GSIS)—effective January 1, 2007—has implemented the faster and more secure way of crediting monthly old-age pension benefits directly to the pensioners' eCard ATM accounts.

With the eCard, old-age pensioners can expect their benefits to be credited to their account on the first working day of every month.

However, despite GSIS' constant reminders, around 17,000 of the 136,145 GSIS old-age pensioners have yet to apply for the eCard. This is the reason why some old age pensioners are not getting their pension benefits.

GSIS would like to clarify that it has NOT SUSPENDED the issuance of monthly old-age pension benefits.

The GSIS renews its appeal to old-age pensioners to enroll for the eCard Plus so that GSIS could resume the crediting of their pension benefits, along with their accrued pensions.

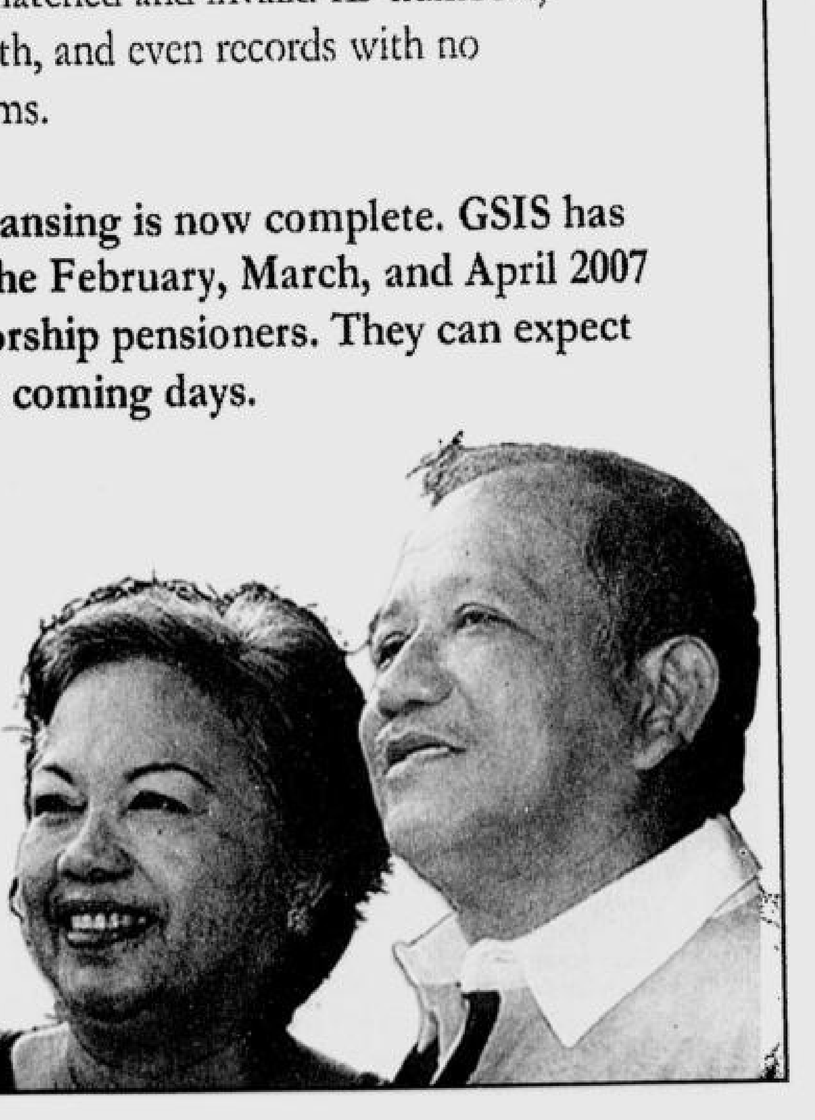
TO OUR SURVIVORSHIP PENSIONERS

The GSIS was compelled to suspend the issuance of the monthly pension checks of survivorship pensioners after it discovered discrepancies in its database of survivorship beneficiaries. Suspension was a painful, but necessary step to give way to the cleansing of this database.

As a result, GSIS was able to weed its database of around 58,000 questionable records. The process prevented potential losses of around P1.67 billion annually, due to uncleansed records, consisting of, among others, unmatched and invalid ID numbers, invalid dates of birth, and even records with no corresponding claims.

The database cleansing is now complete. GSIS has started mailing the February, March, and April 2007 checks of survivorship pensioners. They can expect the checks in the coming days.

Thank you.



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Wider lamppost investigation urged

By Jhunnex Napallacan and Irene R. Sino Cruz
Inquirer Visayas

CEBU CITY—THE OMBUDSMAN WAS ASKED yesterday to expand its formal investigation of the alleged overpricing of lampposts and other devices used for the 12th Asean summit to include other officials of the Department of Public Works and Highways and other contractors.

But Virginia Palanca-Santiago, acting deputy Ombudsman for the Visayas, said her office could no longer discuss the merits of the case since it is now under formal investigation.

This meant, Santiago said, that they could no longer give out information about the case until the graft investigator, or panel of investigators, assigned to handle the case submits a report.

In this phase of the investigation, the respondents would be given a chance to answer the charges, she said.

She said the investigator assigned to handle the case would be the one to decide on any motion related to the plunder case.

The Ombudsman Visayas fact-finding committee found massive overpricing in the P365.8 million decorative lampposts and streetlights project. It also recommended the suspension of respondents DPWH regional director Robert Lala, assistant regional director Marlina Alvizo, DPWH maintenance head Pureza Fernandez and other DPWH officials involved in the signing of checks.

Also recommended for suspension were Mandaue City Mayor Thadeo Ouano and Lapulapu City Mayor Arturo Radaza and officials of the engineering departments of the two cities that prepared the program of works and cost estimates.

The fact-finding committee also said there was collusion between the winning bidders and those who prepared the program of works for the project, Santiago said on Friday.

Santiago explained that she could no longer discuss the case when asked for comment on the omnibus motion submitted yesterday by complainant Cris Saavedra.

Saavedra asked the Ombudsman Visayas to include as respondents in the plunder case the losing bidders of the several contracts for the project as participants in the collusion.

Saavedra, however, did not reveal the names of the losing bidders in his motion. He said he would leave it to the Ombudsman Visayas to identify the losing bidders.

In a phone interview, Saavedra alleged that a losing bidder participating in rigged biddings gets 2 percent of the project cost. "This is the SOP (standard operating procedure)," he added.

But Santiago said the DPWH conducted an alternative bidding, which meant that the agency chose the bidder without going through the usual process.

Santiago, however, refused to comment further on the case since she was now bound by the confidentiality rule.

She said the case has already been raffled but she could not reveal whether a single graft investigator, or a panel of investigators, would handle the case.

Saavedra also sought the inclusion of the DPWH personnel who signed the vouchers and the supporting documents such as the cashier, the accountant, the property custodian and the acceptance committee in the case.

He also sought the issuance of a cease-and-desist order on the payment of all projects undertaken by the DPWH using national funds for the Asean summit.

These include the P83-million closed circuit television surveillance camera system project, road asphalting and the P165-million installation of road safety devices.

MEMBERS of the militant group Sugbuanong Magbubuhis Kontra Kurapsyong (SMKK) stage a rally at the office of the Ombudsman asking for a speedy investigation of the lamppost scandal. JUNJIE MENDOZA/CDN

GMA elder son files bid for 2nd House term

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—Pampanga Rep. Juan Miguel Arroyo on Monday filed his certificate of candidacy for his second term as representative of the province's second district.

Arroyo, President Macapagal-Arroyo's elder son, is running under the Kabalikat ng Malayang Pilipino (Kampi).

Lawyer Temie Lambino, Commission on Elections provincial officer, said no other candidate has filed a COC for the same position in Arroyo's congressional district on Monday.

"None so far yet," said Arroyo when asked if he will have an opponent.

INQUIRER sources in the second district said Arroyo might run unopposed as he is acceptable to the camps of Gov. Mark Lapid and Board Member Lilia Pineda, who are both running for governor.

In the 2004 elections, Arroyo won overwhelmingly against his lone opponent, Rey Lapid, the elder brother of Sen. Manuel "Lito" Lapid.

In Pangasinan, Dagupan City Mayor Benjamin Lim on Monday filed his COC as representative of Pangasinan's fourth district.

Lim's decision fulfilled his vow to provide the people an alternative to Speaker Jose de Venecia Jr., who is seeking reelection.

"I feel fulfilled because we are doing our duty as a citizen to provide the mechanism for democracy [by giving our people] a choice for the leaders that will serve them in the next three years," Lim told reporters.

He was accompanied by his wife, Celia, daughter Irene and his supporters. His son, Brian, whose name had been floated as a likely mayoral candidate in Dagupan, was in Metro Manila reviewing for the bar exams in September.

This was the first time that De Venecia will have a serious opponent after former Vice Gov. Gonzalo Duque challenged the Speaker in the congressional race in 1987. Since 1992, De Venecia virtually ran unopposed.

Lim had told the INQUIRER in earlier interviews that De Venecia's emissaries were convincing him to drop his candidacy.

"I feel normal and relieved because when I have not yet decided to file, I felt so abnormal because there were always these thousand voices telling me that I should run," Lim said.

These "voices" he said, want better government.

"And now that I have filed [my COC], *siguro matatahimik na yung* voices *na iyon* (I think those voices would fade)," Lim added.

Lim, who was formerly with the administration Lakas-CMD, was virtually shut out from all political parties when De Venecia was also endorsed by Kampi, Nationalist People's Coalition, Liberal Party and other political parties composing the administration coalition.

"I was also endorsed by the Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino," De Venecia told the INQUIRER in a phone interview on Friday.

But Lim managed to get a Partido ng Demokratikong Pilipino-Lakas ng Bayan (PDP-Laban) nomination, which was signed by its president, Makati City Mayor Jejomar Binay.

Pangasinan Gov. Victor Agbayani and his wife, Jamie, also filed their COCs on Monday for representative of the second district and for governor, respectively.

Pangasinan Rep. Mark Cojuangco also filed his COC on Monday. He will run unopposed for representative of the fifth district. *Tonette Orejas, Inquirer Central Luzon, and Gabriel Cardiñoza and Yolanda Sotelo-Fuertes, Inquirer Northern Luzon*

ROUNDUP

Oil recovery starts

BACOLOD CITY—The salvage firm Sonsub has started siphoning off the bunker fuel from the tanks on board the sunken MT Solar I off the coast of Guimaras, presidential adviser for Western Visayas Rafael Coscolluela said yesterday. The crew of Sonsub's Allied Shield conducted the retrieval with the help of remotely operated vehicles with robotic arms. Sonsub is an Italian firm specializing in deepwater operations. Solar I sank in August last year, about nine kilometers south of Guimaras to a depth of about 2,100 meters carrying about 2,000 tons of oil. Yesterday, the Allied Shield recovered oil from tank No. 5 of Solar I, Coscolluela said. He said he received information that the oil has been recovered from the other tanks. The retrieval operation takes two days per tank. After Monday, the Allied Shield would have to retrieve the bunker fuel from six remaining tanks on board Solar I. The operation is estimated to last 12 days barring any unusual incident, Coscolluela said. Security ships have effectively warded off intruders from the recovery site, he added. *Carla Gomez, Inquirer Visayas*

Micro finance bank launched

DAGUPAN CITY—Speaker Jose de Venecia Jr. on Sunday launched a micro finance bank that was spun off from four cooperatives that he has been supporting in Pangasinan's fourth congressional district. De Venecia said he gave P16.5 million to the five savings and credit cooperatives out of his congressional fund so they can help their members. The cooperatives—based in the towns of Mangaldan, San Fabian, San Jacinto and Manaoag and this city—were formed into the First Pangasinan Micro Finance Bank so it can extend collateral-free loans to its members. De Venecia said the Catholic Church has also given P1 million, bringing its seed money to P17.5 million. Yolanda Sotelo-Fuertes, Inquirer Northern Luzon

F.C. Tapalla; 92

FRANCISCO C. Tapalla, husband of the late Asuncion Recio, both of Lipa City, Batangas, passed away last March 25 in Mandaluyong City. He is survived by his children Victorio, Virgilio and Aileen, Amada, Marino and Anabel, Marilou; and grandchildren Bernice, Andrea, Erika, Eribel and Ella. Burial is scheduled on Wednesday, March 28 after the 9 a.m. Mass at Floral Garden, Lipa City, Batangas.

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Case filed over ₱1B in uncollected quarry tax

ANOTHER OIL SPILL

TONEE DESPOJO/CDN

Fishermen of Barangay Sto. Niño in Toledo City clean their fishing boat from bunker oil from a ship that docked for repairs and caught fire at the dockyard of the Tsuneishi Heavy Industries in Balamban, Cebu.

By Tonette Orejas
Inquirer Central Luzon

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—PAMpanga Vice Gov. Joseller Guiao yesterday filed a complaint for graft against Gov. Mark Lapid and provincial treasurer Vergel Yabut for their alleged failure to collect between P673.2 million and P1 billion from quarry taxes since 2004.

In a 23-page complaint filed at the Office of the Deputy Ombudsman for Luzon, Guiao cited official collection records from the provincial treasurer's office, from the corporate arm of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources and from the municipal treasurer's offices of Bacolor and Porac towns to point out the "evident bad faith and gross inexcusable negligence" of Lapid and Yabut.

Lapid, 28, chairs the provincial quarry task force while Yabut, as copies of receipts showed, is the collecting officer of the task force.

Lapid's father, Sen. Manuel "Lito" Lapid, created the task force in 1998 when he was governor. By then, Pampanga enjoyed an abundant supply of sand spewed by Mt. Pinatubo's 1991 eruptions and washed down by rains from the slopes yearly since then.

"There is clear and convincing proof of the evident bad faith and gross inexcusable negligence by the respondents," Guiao said, referring to the number of truckloads of sand actually taxed by the town governments and the revenues they derived from those.

Bacolor records from 2004 to February 2007 showed that the town earned P35.4 million by collecting a regulatory fee of P30 on every truckload of sand that averaged 1,145 daily.

Records from Porac, the Lapids' hometown, showed that the local government generated P26.9 million from out of the P40 ecological tax from 2005 to 2006. The number of truckloads averaged 933 a day during the two-year period.

On the other hand, the provincial government reported collecting a total of P68.2 million through a P300 tax it imposed from July 2004 to February 2007. The amount represented 231 truckloads of sand daily.

Guiao said the P382 million in revenues earned by the DENR's Natural Resources Development Corp. from 1999 to 2001 showed an average of 1,181 truckloads a day.

"*Res ipsa loquitur* (The thing speaks for itself). Thus, from the two [towns] alone, if the respondents were not guilty of bad faith and gross inexcusable negligence in the performance of their duties and responsibilities to ensure the effective and efficient collections of quarry taxes, the province could have collected and generated revenues from quarry taxes alone at an average of P224.4 million a year or P673.2 million for three years," Guiao said in the complaint.

If taxes from more than 1,000 truckloads of sand from other sand-rich towns like Mabalacat, Mexico, Floridablanca and Lubao were also included, the provincial government could have earned almost P1 billion in the last three years, he said.

Provincial administrator Fidel Arcenas, who is also the governor's campaign manager, denied the allegation of irregularities.

"Again, this is politically motivated," Arcenas told the INQUIRER.

"I am wondering why the vice governor would file this quarry case when he did not even comment on the estimated collections approved by the local finance committee and the provincial board that pegged the quarry income for 2006 and 2007 at P30 million annually," Arcenas said.

He said Guiao was "acting with spite" because he failed to get the support of the board to transfer to the NRDC the task of collecting quarry taxes and he failed to get the support of two congressional committees in pinning down the Lapids.

On March 3, Guiao filed a first graft complaint against the Lapids, 18 government officials and four private contractors for five alleged double-funded and ghost road projects. They denied the supposed wrongdoing in a counter-affidavit.

Asked on the timing of the recent case, Guiao said: "I have been waiting for the congressional committees to make recommendations but apparently they will not be finishing their reports on time. So we have to act ourselves. Besides, there is no wrong time to do the right thing."

ELEKSYON 2007

Ex-customs exec faces daughter of Baby A

DAGUPAN CITY—A FORMER official of the Bureau of Customs will face the daughter of socialite Rose Marie "Baby" Arenas in the congressional race in the third district of Pangasinan.

Lawyer Gallant Soriano, former deputy commissioner of the BoC, filed his certificate of candidacy before the Commission on Elections here on Monday.

Soriano is the second candidate for the position to file his COC, after Rachel Arenas, daughter of Baby Arenas. Two other candidates in the district—Generoso Tulagan Jr. and Bayambang Mayor Leocadio de Vera—were expected to file their COCs this week.

Soriano will run with the provincial ticket of Dr. Jamie Agbayani, wife of outgoing Gov. Victor Agbayani, who is running for governor.

Soriano said he would run with a complete slate for mayor, vice mayor and councilors in the five towns and one city in the district.

Soriano said he earlier asked all local and national candidates in his district to sign a covenant for honest, orderly and peaceful elections (Hope), "but nobody has taken (up) the challenge."

"Let's give Hope a chance to work, and if untoward incidents happen, that could be the time to declare the district as an area of immediate concern. As of now, there are no reports of election-related incidents," he said.

SORIANO

The Philippine National Police earlier proposed that San Carlos City be classified as an area of immediate concern because of previous election-related cases of violence. The Comelec, however, said it saw no reason yet to declare San Carlos under its control.

San Carlos City Mayor Julian Resuello, in an earlier interview, rejected the police's proposal "because [San Carlos] is a peaceful city and there are no untoward incidents to justify [the classification]."

Quoting a mayor, the elder Arenas had warned there would be bloodshed if her daughter was left out of the process to choose the official candidates of the administration for seats in the House. *Yolanda Sotelo-Fuertes, Inquirer Northern Luzon*

Priest enters gov race as 'alternative' bet

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—A CATHOLIC priest on Monday said he would run for governor of Pampanga as he was ready to field himself as an "alternative moral choice" to reelectionist Gov. Mark Lapid and Board Member Lilia Pineda in the May elections.

Fr. Eddie Panlilio, 53, confirmed his decision in a phone interview as he proceeded to attend the general assembly of the Pampanga clergy here.

"I have heeded the clamor of the laity to serve God's people by running for public office," Panlilio said. "An extraordinary situation like that in Pampanga requires a radical option."

Panlilio was referring to an assessment by laypersons and civil society leaders that a number of voters in Pampanga did not want their choices to be limited between Lapid and Pineda due to the issues of corruption and illegal gambling linked to those two candidates.

In the general assembly, he said he would present a letter to Archbishop Paciano Aniceto to seek "temporary dispensation from priestly ministry while I try to do this obligation."

Another letter is meant for the province's more than 120 priests to tell them of his plan, not necessarily to ask them to campaign for him.

"*Pa-indispu ku* (As a sign of respect, I will inform them of my decision)," he said.

Aniceto said he could "not endorse" Panlilio's candidacy but will "respect his decision," indicating that the priest's bid was not officially supported by the local Roman Catholic Church.

Two contemporaries of Panlilio—Pampanga Bishops Roberto Mallari and Pablo Virgilio David—had been consulted by lay leaders, and said they would also respect Panlilio's decision especially if that was "made out of community discernment."

This will be the first time in Pampanga's election history, though, that a Catholic priest will be fielded in the gubernatorial contest, a check with local church records showed.

Panlilio has been in the priesthood for 26 years. He served as secretary to Lingayen-Dagupan Archbishop Oscar Cruz, a former Pampanga bishop.

Military agents abducted Panlilio in 1981 but he was freed after civil libertarians clamored for his release.

He went on to lead the archdiocese's social action programs, heading also the church's emergency and rehabilitation programs for the victims of Mt. Pinatubo's 1991 eruptions and lahar flows. *Tonette Orejas, Inquirer Central Luzon*

A GROUP of Catholics and lay leaders in Pampanga is pushing Fr. Eddie Panlilio to join the gubernatorial race to give Kapampangans an alternative candidate.

TONETTE OREJAS/INQUIRER CENTRAL LUZON

2 Cojuangco women face off in Tarlac

TARLAC CITY—A BATTLE BEtween two members of the Cojuangco family looms in the first congressional district of Tarlac.

The Kabalikat ng Malayang Pilipino (Kampi) would field Patricia Jose "China" Cojuangco, daughter of Philippine Olympic Committee president Jose "Peping" Cojuangco Jr. and former Tarlac Gov. Margarita "Tingting" Cojuangco, as the party's candidate in the district. The post was held by Jose Jr. from 1961 to 1969 and again from 1987 to 1998.

China, a commercial model, will face her cousin-in-law, Monica "Nikki" Prieto-Cojuangco, a professional model before she became the wife of outgoing Tarlac Rep. Gilberto Cojuangco Teodoro Jr.

In a telephone interview, former Tarlac Board Member Rey Roy, secretary general of the local Kampi chapter, said aside from China's bid for the congressional seat, her father, Jose Jr., would run for governor of the province.

Roy would be Jose Jr.'s running mate.

Roy said Tingting, who served as Tarlac governor from 1995 to 1998, had taken a leave of absence as national chair of Kampi to give way to Interior and Local Government Secretary Ronaldo Puno and to help out in the candidacies of her husband and daughter.

Teodoro, in a phone interview, said his wife would file her certificate of candidacy on March 28, regardless of who her opponent would be.

On the same day, Puno is expected to induct new members of Kampi here, which include China.

Roy said China would seek political office to "continue the selfless service of the Cojuangcos to their home province."

The INQUIRER verified the voter registration details of China and Nikki with the Commission on Elections but the Comelec's database did not show the name of China.

Nikki, on the other hand, is registered in Barangay Matalpitap of Paniqui town under precinct 0168A, the same precinct where China was once registered as a voter.

Roy said China had been "deactivated" from the list of voters for failing to vote twice. However, she has already applied for reactivation at the Comelec office in Manila and that this has already been approved.

Roy said they were just waiting for the release of China's "yellow card" to certify the reactivation. *Jo Martinez-Clemente and Russell Arador, Inquirer Central Luzon*

Pichay: Opposition bets who fear cheating are stupid

LUCENA CITY—CANDIDATES, particularly those in the opposition, who still run despite fears they would be cheated are stupid and need psychiatric tests, a candidate of the administration ticket Team Unity said here.

Prospero Pichay, who is one of the 12 candidates of President Macapagal-Arroyo's Senate ticket, said candidates who feel they would be cheated but continue to run are crazy.

"Why would they still run if they believe that they will just be cheated? I would be crazy to run if I know that I will only be cheated. That's stupidity," Pichay said over JS Files, a TV program aired over local cable station STV6.

He said "the opposition just wants to condition the minds of the voters that if they lose in the May 14 elections, they are cheated."

Pichay said the reason the political opposition is fielding local and national candidates "is because they believe that there was no cheating in 2004 and they also believe that there will be no cheating in 2007."

"If they believe that there was cheating in 2004 and they also believe that there would be another cheating in 2007, they would be crazy to run for senatorial office. They should better consult a psychiatrist," said the former congressman from Surigao del Sur.

Pichay classified the candidates in this year's midterm elections into two categories: Those who believe that there will be no cheating and those who believe that there will be cheating.

However, reelectionist Senator Edgardo admitted that election cheating is still possible.

'Wholesale cheating'

"But most of them is only 'retail' that only happens in some localities. But I believe, there is no deliberate policy for any administration to have a massive, systemic, wholesale cheating," said Angara.

Team Unity senatorial candidate Mike Defensor, said: "The choice is not ours, the choice is with the people. With God's will, we (Team Unity) hope that we all can win."

The administration campaign rally was held at the air-conditioned Quezon Convention Center at the back of the provincial capitol building.

As early as 9 a.m., delegates from the province filled the more than 10,000 seating capacity of the venue.

Packed meals and bottled water were seen being distributed among the delegates composed mostly of farmers, fishermen and members of urban poor groups.

"I brought my entire family because of the free food. Somebody told us that we will also be given allowance for our presence here," Lorenzo Reyes, a resident of an impoverished district in this city, told the INQUIRER. *Delfin Mallari Jr., Inquirer Southern Luzon*

7 fighting for last 4 slots in Magic 12

LEGARDA

VILLAR

PANGILINAN

LACSON

From page A1

Mangahas said either six or seven GO, two independent and either three or four TU candidates were in the "nominal winning circle," as opposition candidate Osmeña and administration candidate Sotto were tied in 12th place.

In fourth to sixth places were GO candidates—reelectionist Sen. Panfilo Lacson (42 percent), Sorsogon Rep. Francis Escudero (40 percent) and Taguig-Pateros Rep. Alan Peter Cayetano (39 percent).

In seventh and eighth places were reelectionist Senators Ralph Recto (37 percent) and Edgardo Angara (32 percent), both administration candidates.

In "statistical contention" for the last four seats were Honasan (29 percent); Arroyo and Aquino, who were tied at Nos. 10-11 (28 percent); Sotto and Osmeña, who were at Nos. 12-13 (26 percent); Pimentel (25 percent), and Defensor (21 percent).

Defensor could join the winning circle because the survey has a margin of error of plus or minus 3 percentage points.

Angara posts biggest gain

The survey showed that Angara posted the biggest gain, entering the Magic 12 from his previous 13th-14th places in the Feb. 22-27 survey.

Angara's rise was at the expense of Osmeña, who dropped three rungs, and Sotto, who dropped four rungs, according to Mangahas.

Tied in 12th place, Sotto and Osmeña were separated by "a meaningless quarter-point," the SWS chief said.

Sonia Roco

At a statistically significant distance were Sonia Roco (GO, 19 percent) and Bukidnon Rep. Juan Miguel Zubiri (TU, 18 percent). Their positions were unchanged from the February opinion poll.

TU candidates Vicente Magsaysay and Cesar Montano were tied at Nos. 18 and 19 (17 percent), while Surigao del Sur Rep. Prospero Pichay, one of the biggest TV ad spenders, was at No. 20 (16 percent).

They were followed by Antonio Trillanes IV (GO), No. 21; Richard Gomez (Ind.) and Teresa Aquino-Oreta (TU), Nos 22-23; Anna Dominique Coseteng (GO), No. 24; Luis "Chavit" Singson (TU), No. 25, and Joselito Cayetano (KBL), No. 26.

Compared with last month's survey, Magsaysay and Pichay each gained two rungs, while Gomez fell four rungs, and Coseteng, three.

Respondents to cast ballots

The survey also found that 88 percent of the respondents said they would "certainly" vote in the May 14 elections.

Nine percent said they would "probably" vote, one percent said they "might be busy," and one percent said they would "definitely not vote."

A tabulation of the responses based on those who said they would "certainly" vote produced no change in the ranking of senatorial candidates, except for Osmeña, who would be "fractionally above" Sotto in their 12th-place tie, according to SWS.

The survey items on the choice of candidates were not commissioned, SWS said.

The names of candidates delisted by the Commission on Elections were excluded in the new poll.

Media sponsor

The Philippine Daily Inquirer is the print media sponsor of the March, April and May rounds of the SWS pre-election surveys, which are aimed at tracking voter preferences for the candidates for national positions in the May elections. *Kate Pedroso, Inquirer Research*

Abalos brother leads group of tricycle drivers

From page A1

nio Abalos is also the elder brother of Benjamin Abalos Sr., chair of the Commission on Elections (Comelec).

Akbayan party-list Rep. Loretta Ann Rosales yesterday raised the issue before the Comelec, questioning the legality and propriety of the body accrediting a supposed party-list organization involving a close relative of its chair.

"There's a conflict of interest," Rosales yesterday told the INQUIRER in an interview. "My gosh, you are the chair of the Comelec ... Jurisprudence itself says that nominees and leaders of a party-list organization must themselves be reflective of a marginalized (sector)."

Arsenio Abalos is a director of Biyaheng Pinoy, a group of tricycle drivers in Mandaluyong City where the Comelec chair lives and had served as mayor, according to Rosales. She said the group had been organized by the city's vice mayor.

Dubious backgrounds

"(A)re you to say that it is of no importance to you that a brother of no less than the chair of the Comelec is a high-ranking leader of a party-list group you recently accredited?" she said in a letter to Abalos yesterday.

Rosales identified Biyaheng Pinoy as one of at least 11 party-list groups accredited by the Comelec despite their allegedly "dubious" backgrounds.

At least four of them—Akbay Pinoy, Babae Ka, Aksyon Sambayanan, and Ang Kasangga—were allegedly fronting for Sigaw ng Bayan, the Malacañang-backed group behind the failed plan to revise the Constitution via a signature campaign last year.

Organized by Malacañang

In her letter, Rosales cited a recent media interview by the Babae Ka spokesperson, who supposedly admitted that the group had been partly organized by Malacañang's Office of External Affairs (OEA).

Citing another media interview, she said no less than Assistant Secretary Marcelo Fariñas II of the OEA had admitted "helping" Agbiag, a regional party whose secretary general is said to be Fariñas himself.

Rosales said the OEA's known function was to "reach out and help NGOs (nongovernment organizations) through a variety of programs and services."

"Here we find Mr. Fariñas, OEA (assistant secretary), reaching out and providing services to himself," the outgoing Akbayan representative told Abalos.

Incestuous

"Isn't this a rather incestuous relationship, Mr. Chairman?" asked Rosales, who is on her third and last term in the House of Representatives.

The party-list system is enshrined in the 1987 Constitution to enable marginalized sectors to take part in legislation.

Since 1998, voters have elected into Congress representatives of national, regional and sectoral parties under the party-list system. Each party-list group is entitled to not more than three seats.

Meticulous

Party-list representatives should constitute 20 percent of the total number of members of the House of Representatives.

In a previous response to another Rosales letter, Abalos said: "As a quasi-judicial agency, Comelec, in screening the various groups, meticulously studies the voluminous records and documents it submits in support of its petition."

"We decide based on evidence presented, whether for or against the above parties, not on mere speculations and hearsay. We look beyond the personalities involved as we, more importantly, lay emphasis on the achievements and track record of the organization as a whole in representation of the 'underrepresented and marginalized,'" Abalos said.

Lack of scrutiny

In the interview with the INQUIRER, Rosales described as "lousy" the manner by which the Comelec was supposedly accrediting party-list groups.

"It seems that the chair, so far, has not addressed (the matter) and scrutinized (the questionable groups) in accordance with the spirit of the law," she said.

"The very fact that so many of these party-list organizations of dubious backgrounds have been accredited raises a question."

In her letter, Rosales also questioned the accreditation of Kakusa, an organization of convicts whose chair emeritus is convicted child rapist Romeo Jalosjos, a former congressman of Zamboanga del Norte.

"How can convicts be qualified to organize themselves into a party-list group on the basis of their track record?" she asked.

"Is it not a fact that convicts are not qualified to vote or run for any position in any election? Is this not making a mockery of an electoral instrument intended to empower the poor?" Rosales said.

Planholders disqualified

A group of education planholders victimized by pre-need companies is also planning to appeal its disqualification by the Comelec.

Philip Piccio, president of the PEP Coalition, questioned the junking of the group's accreditation by the Comelec's Second Division, saying PEP was earlier accredited by the poll body's First Division.

Last week, the Comelec junked PEP Coalition's accreditation based on a complaint filed by another party-list group, the Alliance for Nationalism and Democracy (Anad), which had expressed its intention to field retired Maj. Gen. Jovito Palparan as nominee.

"We went through the process and submitted all the requirements of the Comelec. So why has our registration as a party-list been canceled? What have we done against Anad and General Palparan? Do we look like communists?" Piccio said.

The PEP Coalition started out as a group of parents who were victimized by Pacific Plans Inc. of the Yuchengco family after the company filed for rehabilitation two years ago. The company had said it could not pay the educational plans that the parents bought for their children.

Since then, the PEP Coalition has adopted victims of College Assurance Plan, Platinum Plans and The Professional Group. *With a report from Alcuin Papa*

Esperon on new Leyte mass ...

From page A1

"If we are able to prove that these victims were indeed killed by the NPA, then we can say that it seemed there were many kangaroo courts and proceedings happening there which we know were unjust," Esperon said.

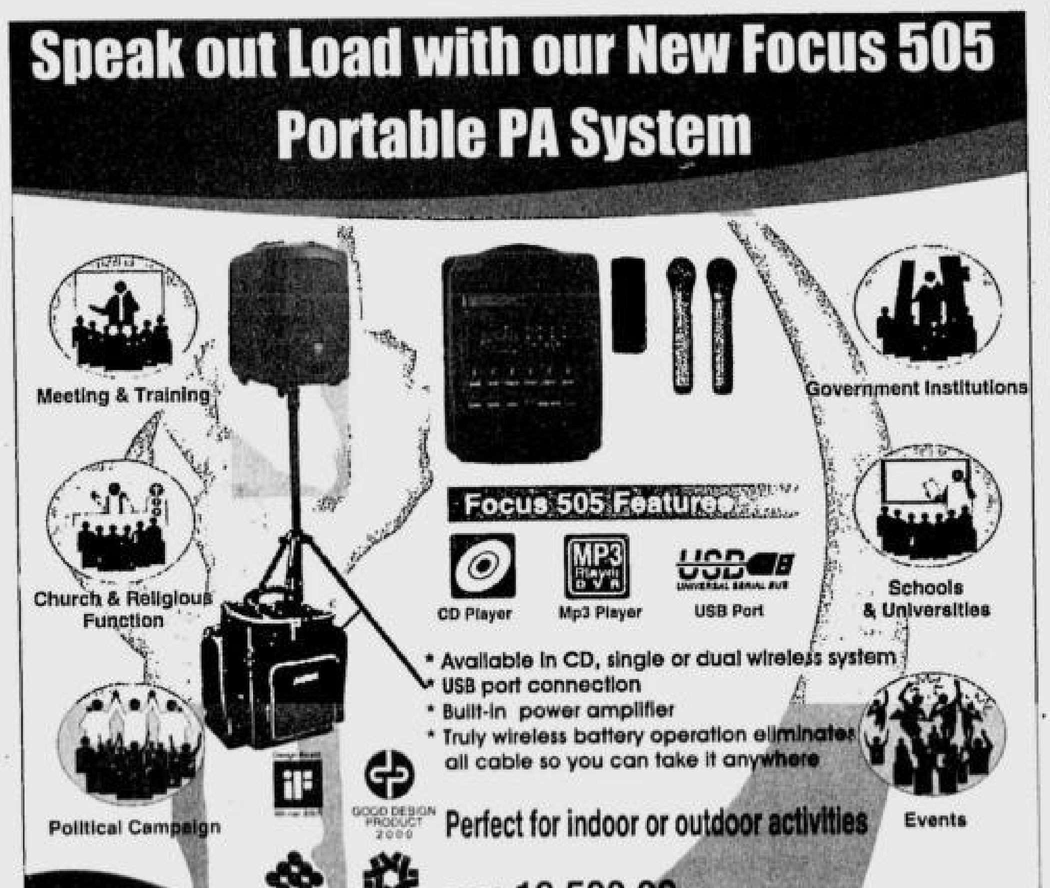
Asked if the discovery of a second NPA grave site would affect Ocampo's case, he said he was not saying that the latest report of an NPA grave site was connected with the murder charges against Ocampo.

On Sunday, Maj. Ernesto Torres, Army spokesperson, said that elements of the Army's 43rd Infantry Battalion had discovered a second gravesite in Hilongos, Southern Leyte, on March 21 and that it contained the remains of as many as 15 alleged spies slain by the communist New People's Army.

But Lt. Col. Mario Lacurom, 43rd IB commander, dismissed the report.

"I was surprised when I was told about the TV report saying that we had found a (second) mass grave," Lacurom told the INQUIRER by telephone yesterday.

However, Lacurom said there had been information that 10 to 15 alleged victims of the NPA purge of suspected military spies had been buried in Inopacan and Hindang-Hilongos in Southern Leyte but that their remains had not been found.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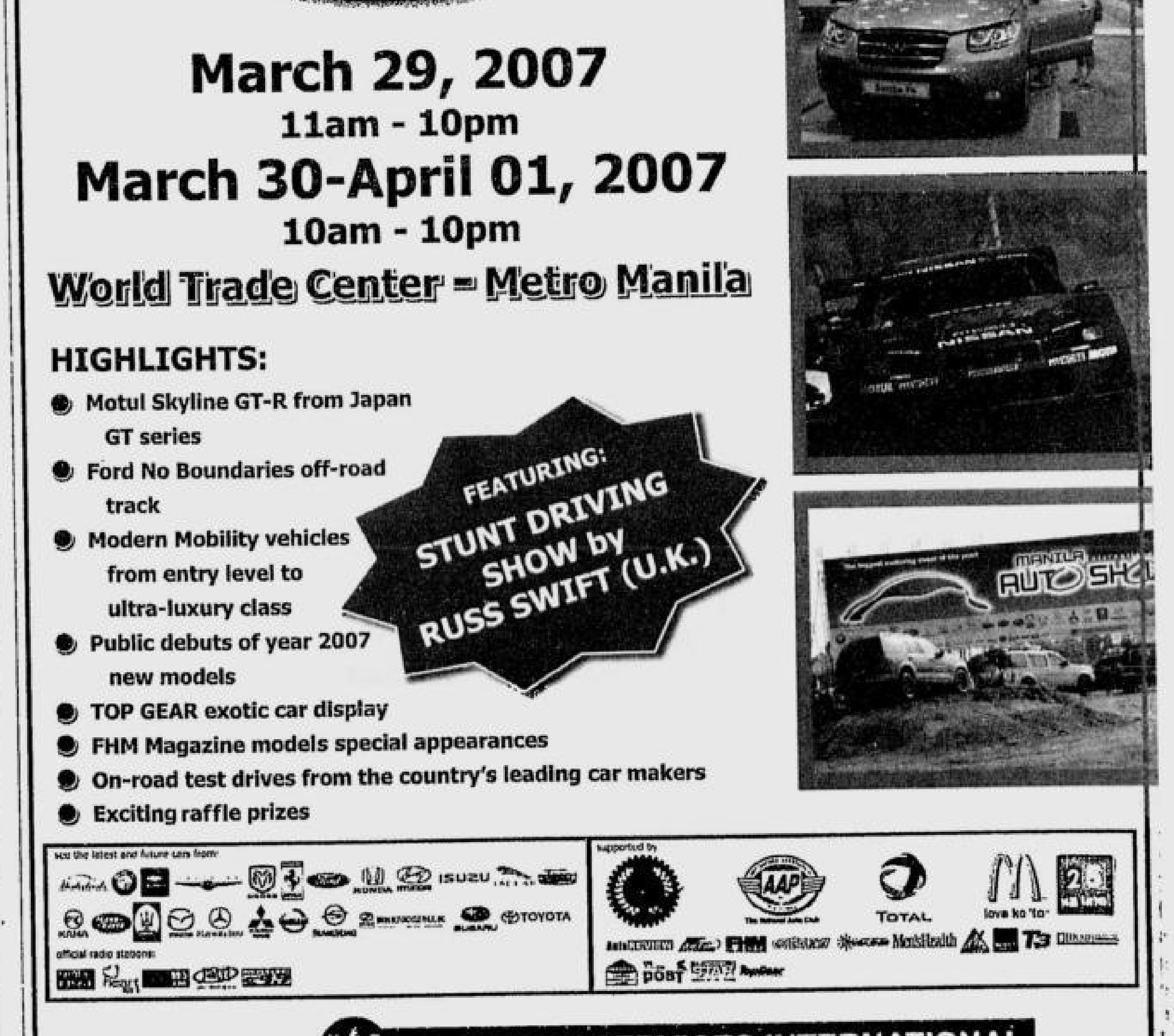
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Lakas, Kampi back Vilma; Sanchez left out in cold

By Michael Lim Ubac

FINALLY, THE TWO WARRING PARTIES OF THE ADministration coalition have found common ground.

Lipa City Mayor Vilma Santos is the official gubernatorial candidate in vote-rich Batangas of both the ruling party Lakas-Christian Muslim Democrats and the Kabalikat ng Malayang Pilipino (Kampi) in the May elections.

After Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita announced that Santos was Lakas' official candidate for the governorship, Camarines Sur Rep. Luis Villafuerte followed suit.

Ermita is Lakas' regional chair for Southern Tagalog, which includes his bailiwick Batangas, while Villafuerte is president of Kampi, the party of President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Ermita's son Edwin, a banker, will be Santos' running mate.

During the administration's Team Unity's campaign sortie in Bicol last Friday, Villafuerte announced in the presence of all 12 administration senatorial bets that Kampi would also support Santos' candidacy.

Surprised

Reelectionist Sen. Ralph Recto, Santos' husband, was surprised but elated by the announcement.

Thus, newly inducted Kampi member, reelectionist Batangas Gov. Armand Sanchez, must now fend for himself—at least for now.

Having bolted the Liberal Party wing under Manila Mayor Lito Atienza to join Kampi, Sanchez now has to look for another party to endorse his reelection bid.

Kampi's move came on the heels of Ms Arroyo's order for her party mates to stop raiding the ranks of the ruling party.

Lakas executive director Ray Roquero said the President had quietly relayed the order to Kampi officials to put an end to the infighting that had threatened to tear the administration coalition apart with the midterm elections less than two months away.

Both parties were at loggerheads over a number of positions and at least two administration allies wanted to run for the same post.

Roquero said the President was assuming her "rightful role" as the head of the coalition by taking a more active hand in the resolution of the Lakas-Kampi row over candidates at the local level.

In a phone interview yesterday, Recto said he himself was surprised by Villafuerte's announcement in Naga City.

Better candidate

In front of all local the leaders of Camarines Sur, Villafuerte "was endorsing my wife, Vilma, as the official candidate of Kampi in his capacity as party president," he said.

The significance of Kampi's move was not lost on the senator.

"The two most significant parties [in the coalition] realized that Vilma was the better candidate, and because of Louie Villafuerte's statement, I don't know if Kampi will still issue a certificate of nomination to Sanchez," Recto said.

He said that the open endorsement of Villafuerte had already sent "ripples to Kampi party mates in Batangas."

"In fact, there are a lot of mayors of Kampi talking to us. It appears that all the four congressmen are supporting Vilma, aside from the overwhelming support from the people," Recto said.

Of the 34 mayors in Batangas, those currently supporting Vilma's gubernatorial bid include all eight mayors from the first district, three from the second district, three from the third district and all seven from the fourth district.

The rest of the mayors, who are mostly Kampi members, now want to join Vilma's camp, Recto said.

Casiño files perjury, libel raps vs militants' widows

By Allison W. Lopez

PARTY-LIST REP. TEDDY CASIÑO of Bayan Muna slapped perjury and libel charges against four widows of slain militants in the Manila Chief Prosecutor's Office yesterday.

Casiño lodged the complaint against Isabelita Bayudang, Medelyn Felipe, Cleotilde Aguilar-Peralta and Julie Flores Sinohin, all of Bongabon, Nueva Ecija, who filed on March 16 a disqualification case against Bayan Muna with the Commission on Elections. They charged Casiño with harassing them and threatening to kill their husbands for supporting the rival Akbayan party-list group between 1998 and 2001.

Disenfranchise

Felipe also accused Casiño, detained Bayan Muna Rep. Satur Ocampo, Gabriela Rep. Liza Maza and Anakpawis Rep. Rafael Mariano of ordering her husband's execution.

The hearing of the Comelec case will be held today. Casiño will be filing his party-list candidacy for a congressional seat tomorrow.

In a statement, Casiño said Bayan Muna would not take lightly the "defamation of our good name for which 130 of our members have offered their lives in supreme sacrifice. Those who commit libel and perjury in their attempt to discredit and disenfranchise Bayan Muna must face criminal proceedings."

In his affidavit, Casiño countered that Bayan Muna was not yet in existence in 1998, adding that Comelec records would show the party-list group was registered in February 2001. He also said Anakpawis and Gabriela had not yet been conceived in 2001, and that Bayan Muna did not have armed members.

"The statement is so general and is intended more to destroy the good name of Bayan Muna, Anakpawis and Gabriela for political reasons," he said.

The widows also alleged that Bayan Muna removed their Akbayan posters, thus preventing them from campaigning for their group. Felipe claimed to have met the four representatives in a meeting of leftist leaders in Bongabon in 2003.

'Perjured affidavits'

Casiño said he had never been to Bongabon, Nueva Ecija; and he did not know Danilo Felipe, much less order his killing or the killing of any member of Akbayan."

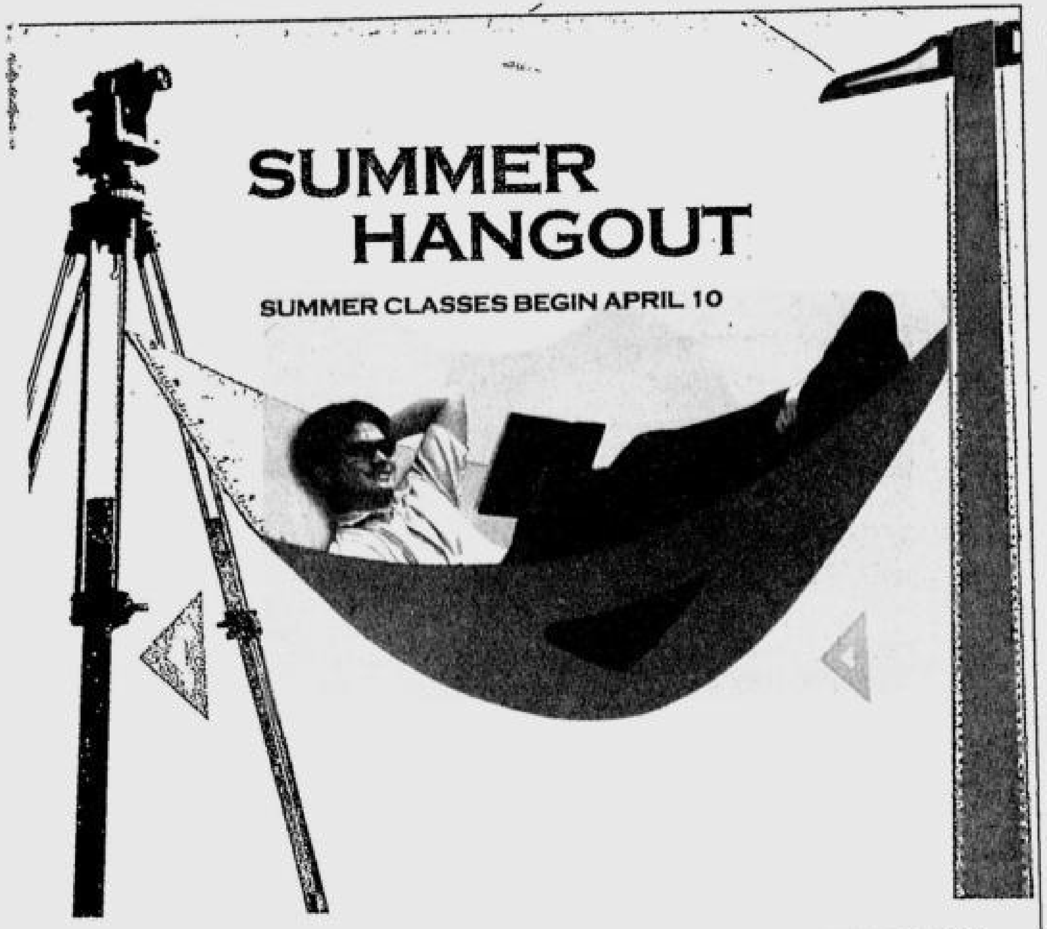
Bayudang and Felipe, he said, recycled "perjured affidavits" of Aguilar-Peralta and Sinohin "in making their own false claims against Bayan Muna."

"These falsehoods are made by persons who hide and are afraid to show their faces because they are ashamed of their lies and are cowards who could not even frontally face the ones they accused," he said, referring to the two women who appeared before the Comelec wearing veils.

Casiño said that aside from answering the disqualification case at the Comelec, the group decided to press criminal charges against the four so they could still be held liable for their statements even if the Comelec case is dismissed.

"Let this be a stern warning to those who allow themselves to be used by the government and the military," Casiño said.

A civil case was also filed in the Quezon City Regional Trial Court.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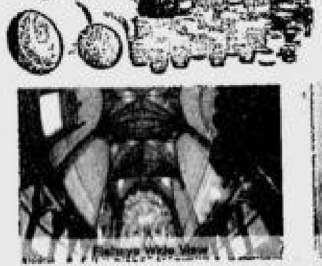

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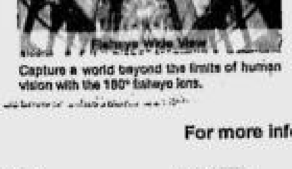
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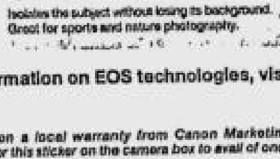
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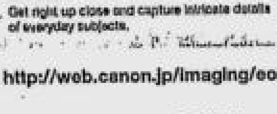
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Scramble for COCs starts for Metro bets

Mayoral hopefuls file papers days before March 29 deadline

By Allison W. Lopez, Julie M. Aurelio and Nancy C. Carvajal

MAYORAL CANDIDATES SHOWED up in droves yesterday to file their certificates of candidacy (COC), days before the March 29 deadline set by the Commission on Elections for the May 14 elections.

The "hopefuls" included the incumbents, former mayors hoping to reclaim what was once theirs, congressmen, a senator and a political neophyte.

At the local Comelec office on Arroceros, Manila, the first candidate to file his COC was Ali Atienza, who was accompanied by his father, Mayor Lito Atienza. The 34-year-old Atienza will be running with Don Bagatsing, who also filed his COC.

The father-and-son tandem, clad in red Hawaiian shirts, said they did not know what the other would be wearing. The mayor, however, claimed it was "providential coincidence. It's also symbolic of our thinking and our desire to continue the Buhayin Ang Maynila program. We're both imbued with the same passion for the program we started in 1998."

Next to come in was the opposition's candidate, Sen. Alfredo Lim, with Sen. Jinggoy Estrada in tow.

Lim and Jinggoy, clad in the orange trademark color of former President Estrada, came to the Comelec on a cart pulled by a donkey. Lim's running mate, according to him, would be Rep. Joey Hizon of the 5th District.

MANILA Mayor Lito Atienza (center) endorses son, Ali (right), for mayor and his running mate, Don Bagatsing. Father and son were dressed in their trademark Hawaiian shirts. REM ZAMORA

"We will drive out the drug pushers and prostitutes who have come back to Manila," said Lim, a former Manila mayor and National Bureau of Investigation director.

Two minutes after Lim's group arrived, Rep. Rudy Bacani of the 4th District and his running mate, Pastor Grepor "Butch" Belgica, entered the Comelec office. Outside, their supporters chanted "Ba-ca-ni." while Lim's followers answered with cries of "Ma-yor Lim."

Bacani and Belgica, both in green, were joined by Bishop Teodoro Bacani, Rudy's brother.

"I just advised him (Rudy) to seek success in the way God wants," the bishop told reporters.

In Pasay, the city's former officials—Mayor Wenceslao "Peewee" Trinidad and Vice Mayor Antonino "Tony" Calixto—filed their certificates in the Comelec office at City Hall.

Both officials, who were in orange, raised their fists as their supporters, who were also wearing orange T-shirts, shouted their names.

"*Tuloy na tuloy na ito,*" Trinidad said of his renewed bid for the mayoralty after he affixed his signature to his COC. Calixto will once again be his running mate.

The two officials, along with 10 city councilors, were dismissed from the government service in January after being suspended for six months over an allegedly anomalous garbage disposal contract.

Former Parañaque Mayor Pablo Olivares, meanwhile, was all alone when he submitted his documents to the local Comelec.

The incumbent, Florencio "Jun" Bernabe, had filed his COC last month with his running mate, actor Anjo Yllana, the first to do so among the Metro's bets.

In Pasig, Rep. Robert Vincent "Dodot" Jaworski formalized his run for the city's mayoralty seat when he filed his COC at the local Comelec office just before noon yesterday.

The 35-year old congressman, the political rival of incumbent city Mayor Vicente Eusebio, submitted his documents at 11:20 a.m., along with his wife, Mikee Cojuangco, supporters and other candidates.

Jaworski's running mate is Briccio V. Ramos, 48, a barangay captain and businessman.

Jaworski would likely clash head-to-head with Robert Eusebio, the mayor's son who is one of the city's councilors.

In Navotas, reelectionists

SCRAMBLE/ A18

BISHOP Teodoro Bacani Jr. is flanked by his brother, Rep. Rudy Bacani (right), who also wants to be mayor of Manila, and Grepor "Butch" Belgica, his running mate. REM ZAMORA

SEN. JINGGOY Estrada is fully supportive of fellow Sen. Alfredo Lim, who is making another bid for Manila's top post. REM ZAMORA

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DID YOU KNOW

PANDACAN in Manila was established as a community in 1578 when Franciscan priests undertook a mission in the area. Because of its many canals leading to the Pasig River, it was referred to in the 19th century as "Little Venice" or "Little Italy."

In 1910, American traders built a terminal for oil barges on the Pasig riverbank. They bought lots adjacent to the river to serve as product warehouses. This paved the way for the establishment of an oil depository in the area.

Cyril L. Bonabente, Inquirer Research

Dirtier by the dozen

ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo

THE SUPREME COURT IS REportedly investigating the activities of the so-called "Dirty Dozen" at the Court of Appeals, my sources told me.

The "Dirty Dozen" are justices who demand bribes from litigants whose cases have been elevated to the appellate court.

Their temporary restraining orders (TROs) are allegedly also for sale.

* * *

An Air Force band plays to passengers arriving at the Puerto Princesa Airport.

No, they do not welcome VIPs. The band plays to all arriving passengers of Philippine Airlines, Cebu Pacific, Air Philippines and SeaAir.

The idea of a welcoming band came from Brig. Leo Lapinid, chief of the Air Force component of the Western Command.

But here's a sour note: The airport's cargo conveyor has not been fixed after it broke down several months ago.

This, despite the fact that each departing passenger pays P40 for airport tax. Where does the money go?

***

Senior Supt. Dennis Peña, the new Palawan police director, is one cop who thinks differently from most of his colleagues.

A day after the grenade blast in the province that killed eight persons and wounded scores of others, Peña told his subordinates: "I can't go to sleep with the thought that people are dying at the provincial hospital."

He was reacting to reports from subordinates that some of the wounded were in serious condition and could die.

And since I'm praising Peña in this column, he could get into trouble. Guilt by association, you know.

* * *

The Crusade Against Violence-Visayas chapter has written the Supreme Court through Christopher Lock, court administrator, expressing support for the plan to abolish the Court of Appeals branch in Cebu.

"We have received a lot of information about this 'justice for sale' corruption issue," said Thelma Chiong, the group's national vice president.

"It may not be a cause for wonder that Visayas magistrates, whose wives hail from the Visayas, prefer to be appointed to the Court of Appeals-Cebu," Chiong added.

"Should the worst come that you decide to abolish the Court of Appeals-Cebu for justice's sake, you have our full support," she added.

The CAV-Visayas Chapter is just one among many groups that have complained against the alleged corruption in this particular court.

I've talked to a lot of lawyers in Cebu who confirm the blatant corruption there.

"The corruption among the justices (in Cebu) makes one retch, Mon," said a lawyer who has cases pending in the appellate court.

Jeep strike vs 'mulcters'; Bernabe cries foul

By Julie M. Aurelio

A JEEPNEY DRIVERS' GROUP IN Parañaque City yesterday went on strike to protest the city government's alleged inaction on their complaint about colorum (illegal) FX taxis.

The protesters, members of the Philippine Confederation of Drivers and Operators-Alliance of Concerned Transport Organization, also complained that some of Mayor Florencio "Jun" Bernabe's men were extorting money from them.

Efren de Luna, PCDO-ACTO president, said around 3,000 members of his group joined the mass action. But Parañaque police chief, Supt. Ronald Estilles, estimated the protesting drivers' number at 150.

Among the routes that were affected as early as 7 a.m. yesterday were Dr. Arcadio Santos Avenue (formerly Sucat Road), Baclaran, Pasay, Cavite and the SM Mall of Asia.

To help stranded commuters, the city government fielded two 60-seater buses and around six dump trucks. Things, however, returned to normal at around noon after the drivers reached a temporary truce with the police.

"Our drivers returned to work around noon but this is only temporary until the city government reneges on its end of the bargain again," said De Luna. He added that the PCDO-ACTO would stage another strike if the drivers' problems remain unresolved.

Last month, De Luna's group went on strike to complain about colorum FX taxis operating in the area which, according to the drivers, had reduced their daily earnings.

"Nothing came out of our negotiations last time," De Luna complained.

He accused some of Bernabe's men of extorting P5 from jeepney drivers passing by the Redemptorist Church in Baclaran.

The mayor, however, vehemently denied the accusation and said the men De Luna was referring to were not City Hall employees but barkers who had set up "checkpoints" in the area.

"I reject the allegation that we are not doing or have not done anything to resolve some or all of their problems. They keep complaining about '*kotong* traffic enforcers' but up to now, they have not given me names," Bernabe said.

He added that he has asked the Traffic Management Group to go after colorum FX taxis operating in the area.

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STRANDED passengers get a free ride on a bus provided by the Parañaque City government as jeepney drivers went on strike yesterday. ROMY HOMILLADA

Estilles, meanwhile, said his men earlier arrested five men who were caught extorting money from jeepney drivers. The suspects, however, were freed after no one came forward to file complaints against them.

The five were identified as Delon Law, Ernesto Pineda, Nilo Mantilano, all residents of Parañaque City; Randel Lee of Pasay and Froilan Lopez of Laguna.

Bernabe criticized the PCDO-ACTO for breaking an agreement that it would not hold a transport strike without first notifying the city government.

Actor Regala nabbed in drug raid

By Tina G. Santos

THREE PERSONS, INCLUDING ACTOR John Regala, were arrested by operatives of the Manila Police District during a raid Saturday afternoon in Malate, Manila.

Apart from Regala, 39, also arrested by members of the District Anti-Illegal Drugs-Special Operations Task Group were Antonio Flores Jr., 42 and Roberto Aguas, 45, both of F.T. Benitez St,. Malate.

Charges for violation of Republic Act 9165 (Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002) were filed against the suspects in the Manila Prosecutor's Office.

A concerned citizen tipped off police about the frequent presence of the suspects in Regala's Malate house.

Although Aguas was the only one caught sniffing methamphetamine hydrochloride or shabu, police also took in Regala and Flores for questioning. The two were later released, although police said they were not yet off the hook. Regala, who was reportedly asleep at the time of the raid, denied the charge.

Scramble for COCs starts for Metro bets

From page A17

Navotas Mayor Toby Tiangco and his vice mayor, Patrick Joseph Javier, were the first to throw their hat into the political ring.

Both made a low-key appearance at the local Comelec office on Saturday morning, accompanied by just a few followers and City Hall employees.

In contrast, Caloocan City Mayor Enrico Echiverri and his running mate, Councilor Henry Camayo, held a motorcade just before submitting their COCs.

In Quezon City, 43-year-old Andy Rosales, who called himself a social engineer, is the only one who has filed his COC for the city's highest post.

Rosales submitted his certificate to the local Comelec on March 22.

With Kristine L. Alave and Margaux C. Ortiz

METRO BRIEFS

Palao kin killed

A RELATIVE of the government's star witness against suspected drug lord Amin Imam Boratong was gunned down Sunday, the Pasig City police reported yesterday. Glicerio Suyman Bahande, 47, died on the spot when he was shot at close range four times on Baltazar Street, Pasig City. Bahande was a brother-in-law of Samer Palao, the government's main witness and Boratong's former right hand man. Pasig police chief, Senior Supt. Francisco Uyami, said that based on witnesses' accounts, the gunman was a former policeman, PO2 Ramil Along alias Macmac. Police said Bahande knew about Boratong's drug deals, having served as his driver.

Kristine L. Alave

Love angle?

THE POLICE believe that a spurned lover was behind Sunday night's attack on a 19-year old student who was shot to death outside his house in Barangay Batasan Hills, Quezon City. Lawrence Scott Hernandez, a Hotel Restaurant Management student of the Our Lady of Fatima University, died instantly from three bullet wounds in the head. The attack was carried out by five men and a woman who stopped in front of the victim's house on board two motorcyles and a red Mitsubishi Lancer with license plate TAX 623.

Jeannette I. Andrade

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Wife of ousted Thaksin charged with tax evasion

BANGKOK, THAILAND—THE wife of ex-Thai Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra was charged Monday with evading millions of dollars in taxes, opening the first corruption case involving the ousted leader's inner circle since a September coup.

Pojaman Shinawatra, her brother and secretary were arraigned at the Bangkok Criminal Court and released after posting bail of 15 million baht (US$476,000; euro120,000) bail, said her lawyer Nopadol Patama.

The court set a trial date for May 14.

The case marks the first prosecution of those close to Thaksin, who was ousted by a September military coup and accused of widespread corruption. Coup leaders had cited Thaksin's corruption as justification for his ouster and have faced strong criticism for being slow to prove their allegations, many of which remain under investigation.

Pojaman, who could face prison time if found guilty, made no comment to reporters as she was escorted by dozens of police from the courthouse and into a dark sedan. More than 100 police were deployed in the area amid concerns over possible protests by both supporters and opponents of Thaksin, police Capt. Somsak Wimanrat said.

The family's lawyer said the trio planned to plead not-guilty and defense preparations were under way.

"We are preparing the best tax lawyers to fight this case in court," Nopadol told reporters.

The case centers on a 1997 transfer of shares in the family telecommunications empire later known as Shin Corp.

An investigation by the Assets Examination Committee found last month that Thaksin's wife and her brother had to pay back taxes of about 546 million baht—about US$17 million (euro12 million) at the current exchange rate—on the share transfer. The committee was appointed by coup leaders to investigate alleged corruption linked to Thaksin's administration.

Pojaman and her brother, Bhanapot Damapong, face a maximum penalty of 14 years in prison and a 400,000 baht (US$12,600; euro9,100) fine each if convicted on two tax evasion counts, said Attapol Yaisawang, spokesperson for the Attorney General's Office.

The secretary, Kanchanapa Honghern, would face a maximum penalty of seven years and a 200,000 baht (US$6,300; euro4,500) fine because she is accused of only one charge.

Thaksin transferred shares in Shin Corp. to his maid and other domestic helpers to shed holdings before taking public office. His first of two terms as prime minister began in 2001.

This case is not connected to the contentious sale last year of Shin Corp. to Temasek Holdings, a Singaporean state-owned company, for 73.3 billion baht (US$2.2 billion; euro1.7 billion). But it is being widely watched as part of the corruption allegations against Thaksin.

The Shin sale drew widespread protests because it placed strategic assets, including communications satellites, in the hands of foreigners, and because the deal was structured so that Thaksin's family did not have to pay any capital gains tax.

Protests over the sale fueled calls for Thaksin to resign, causing political tensions that culminated in September's coup.

Thaksin's daughter Pintongta and son Phantongtae are under investigation by the Assets Examination Committee in connection with that transaction.

Thaksin was in New York when the coup occurred and has not returned to Thailand since. Pojaman has kept Bangkok as her primary residence, periodically joining her husband on trips he has made to other Asian countries and at an apartment they own in London. *AP*

POJAMAN Shinawatra AP

Republicans express doubt over Gonzales

WASHINGTON—THREE REPUBlican senators voiced fresh concerns on Sunday about Attorney General Alberto R. Gonzales' handling of the dismissals of eight US lawyers that Democrats say were politically motivated.

The comments, in separate televised interviews with Republicans with histories of breaking with the White House, provided further indication of waning support for Gonzales where he needs it most, among fellow Republicans.

Questions over Gonzales' future intensified on both sides of the aisle this weekend after the release of justice department documents late Friday that detailed plans for a meeting in which Gonzales and his aides discussed the dismissals last year, 10 days before they happened. Gonzales had previously said he was "not involved in any discussions about what was going on."

Speaking on "Meet the Press" on NBC, Sen. Arlen Specter, R-Pa., said he spoke with Gonzales on Saturday and told him "he was going to have an explanation as to why he said he wasn't involved in discussions—that's the key word—and now you have these e-mails which appear to contradict that."

White House officials continued to defend Gonzales, saying the email messages did not directly contradict anything he had said and noting that he had not disputed that at the end of the process he signed off on the final list of prosecutors to be dismissed. *NYT*

WOMEN OF BURMA

Young Burmese women lay down fresh gravel while repairing the road to Mandalay March 25 near Bago, Burma, also known as Myanmar. AP

Study says kids in day care develop behavior problems

A MUCH-ANTICIPATED REPORT FROM THE largest and longest-running study of American child care has found that keeping a preschooler in a day care center for a year or more increased the likelihood that the child would become disruptive in class—and that the effect persisted through the sixth grade.

The effect was slight, and well within the normal range for healthy children, the researchers found. And as expected, parents' guidance and their genes had by far the strongest influence on how children behaved.

But the finding held up regardless of the child's sex or family income, and regardless of the quality of the day care center.

On the positive side, the authors also found that time spent in high-quality day care centers was correlated with higher vocabulary scores through elementary school.

The research, being reported Monday as part of the federally financed Study of Early Child Care and Youth Development, tracked more than 1,300 children in various arrangements, including staying home with a parent; being cared for by a nanny or a relative; or attending a large day care center. Once the subjects reached school, the study used teacher ratings of each child to assess behaviors like interrupting class, teasing and bullying. The findings are certain to feed a long-running debate over day care, experts say.

The debate reached a high pitch in the late 1980s, during the so-called day care wars, when social scientists questioned whether it was better for mothers to work or stay home. Day care workers and their clients, mostly working parents, argued that it was the quality of the care that mattered, not the setting. But the new report affirms similar results from several smaller studies in the past decade suggesting that setting does matter.

Other experts were quick to question the results. The researchers could not randomly assign children to one kind of care or another; parents chose the kind of care that suited them. That meant there was no control group, so determining cause and effect was not possible. And some said that measures of day care quality left out important things. *NYT*

5 US soldiers killed in Iraq blasts

BAGHDAD—BOMB ATTACKS KILLED FIVE US soldiers in Iraq, the US military said on Monday amid reports that the outgoing US ambassador held talks last year with Sunni rebel groups in a bid to curb the country's raging insurgency.

Four of the Americans were killed in a roadside bombing on Sunday against their patrol in the troubled province of Diyala, where the chief US commander has said his troops are battling al-Qaida, Sunni, Shiite and even Kurdish renegades.

Two troops were also wounded in the attack, while another soldier died in northwestern Baghdad on the same day in another roadside bombing—the biggest single killer of US forces fighting in Iraq.

The latest casualties brought the military's losses to 3,234 in since US-led foreign troops invaded Iraq in March 2003 to oust president Saddam Hussein, according to an AFP count based on Pentagon figures.

In Iraq's third city of Mosul, gunmen on Sunday killed Sunni tribal leader Mohammed Jassim al-Guud, a member of the Al-Ubada that is a significant Arab tribe in northern Iraq, said police Major Mohammed Ahmed.

Guud's son and nephew were also wounded after the insurgents sprayed his vehicle with gunshots in central Mosul late Sunday, the policeman added. *AFP*

Low-birth Singapore woos immigrants

SINGAPORE—MILLIONAIRE ENTREPRENEUR Robert V. Chandran is just the kind of man Singapore wants.

The India-born entrepreneur listed his marine fuel company Chemoil Energy Ltd. in Singapore in 2006, created about 60 jobs in the city-state, and swapped his American passport for a Singaporean one.

Singapore's government is so worried about the low birth rate and greying population that it is turning to immigrants like Chandran to add another two million people to the island of 4.5 million over the next 40 to 50 years.

For "new" Singaporeans such as Chandran, who can afford to pick and choose where they live, the city-state has a lot to offer: clean air, affordable housing, good schools, reliable phone and Internet connections, and an income tax rate of up to 20 percent that is one of the lowest in the region.

"Singapore has a great quality of life," Chandran, 57, told Reuters. "Not to mention the taxes."

Many countries—such as Spain, Ireland and United Arab Emirates—rely on immigration to boost a shrinking labor force. But Singapore's immigration plan is unique because it would boost the population by nearly 50 percent, to the point where those born in Singapore would barely form a majority in their own country.

Such a huge influx of people is worrying many Singaporeans, who fear that they will lose their jobs to foreign immigrants.

They also worry about over-crowding and strained race relations.

Most of Singapore's 3.6 million citizens are themselves descendants of earlier waves of immigrants who fled civil war in China or followed the British in colonial times.

Ethnic Chinese make up 75 percent of the population, ethnic Malays 14 percent, Indians 9 percent and others 2 percent.

But the island already has nearly one million foreigners, mostly low-skilled maids and construction workers from countries such as the Philippines, India and Thailand.

There are also some 110,000 professional expatriates, according to the Manpower Ministry, from Europe, North America, Australia, China and India—and those are the ones that some Singaporeans see as a threat to local jobs.

Those hoping to become Singapore residents or citizens are judged on their qualifications, work experience and income, according to a checklist provided by the immigration authorities.

Given the kind of affluent foreigners the government wants to woo, Singaporeans worry they will become "second-class citizens" in their own country, at a time when many poorer Singaporeans already feel left behind because of a widening income gap.

Singapore stresses racial and social harmony—anyone caught "promoting" racial hostility or disrupting public order can be jailed—but some fear that immigration may cause problems.

Non-Singaporean Indians "don't mix with the local Indians and then they stay apart, and in some cases, consider themselves superior to the local Indians," said Indranee Rajah, a member of parliament, the Straits Times newspaper reported this month. *Reuters*

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NOTICE OF FILING OF APPLICATION/S FOR ALIEN EMPLOYMENT PERMIT/S (AEP/S)

Notice is hereby given that the following companies/employers have filed with this Regional Office application/s for Alien Employment Permit/s.

Name and address of Company/Employer	Name of Foreign National	Position
MEGA INTERNATIONAL COMMERCIAL BANK CO. LTD. 3/F Pacific Star Bldg. Sen. Gil Puyat Ave., Makati City	Guey-Zen Huang	Vice-President and General Manager
MANULIFE DATA SERVICES, INC. 8/F ELJCC Bldg., ABS-CBN Broadcast Center, Sgt. Esguerra Ave. cor. Mother Ignacia St., Diliman, Quezon City	Bo Tian	Technical Business Process Associate
MANULIFE DATA SERVICES, INC. 8/F ELJCC Bldg., ABS-CBN Broadcast Center, Sgt. Esguerra Ave. cor. Mother Ignacia St., Diliman, Quezon City	Bin Liu	Technical Business Process Associate
TIERA GENERAL CORP. S-11 Manlena Garden, #24 Mariposa St., Bagong Lipunan, Crame, Quezon City	Sun Yeol Choi	General Supervisor
HOLLEY INTERNATIONAL (PHILIPPINES) OFFICE Unit 1403-A West Tower PSE Bldg., Exchange Rd., Ortigas Center, Pasig City	Hao Yan	Representative
PILIPINAS INTERNATIONAL MARKETING SERVICES, INC. 28/F Orient Square Bldg., Emerald Ave., Ortigas, Pasig City	Harunobu Yamamoto	Japanese Translator
PITSTOP PRECISION IT SERVICES ON TIME, INC. G&2/F Pitstop Bldg. 1357 Candelaria St., Santiago Village, Valenzuela City	Kevin John Lewis	Director
CAMOX PHILIPPINES INC. Unit 3 A Hernandez Bldg., 1646 Evangelista cor. Belarmino St., Bangkal, Makati City	Hannes Yaghi	Consultant
WONDERPHIL CONSULTANT CORP. Unit F 7/F, Westgate Tower, Investment Drive, Madrigal Business Park, Ayala Alabang, Muntinlupa City	Jung Na Lee	Assistant Account Manager

If you have any information/objection to the above mentioned application/s please communicate with the Regional Director.

LOURDES M. TRASMONTE
Regional Director

The Department of Labor and Employment will launch a special project entitled "DOLE-PESO Rotary International 3830-Philhealth on Social Protection for Kasambahay" on March 28, 2007.

(PDI - March 27, 2007)

The WORLD

Editor **Luverne B. Gueco**

Iran to limit cooperation with IAEA

TEHRAN—IRAN SAID ON SUNDAY IT WOULD limit cooperation with the UN's nuclear watchdog and vowed not to halt its atomic program "even for one second" following new financial and arms sanctions.

The UN Security Council unanimously approved the sanctions on Saturday for Tehran's refusal to suspend its program, but major powers also offered new talks and renewed an economic and technological incentive package offer.

An Iranian government spokesperson said Iran would limit its cooperation with the UN watchdog, the Vienna-based International Atomic Energy Agency, in retaliation.

"Iran will not stop its peaceful and legal nuclear trend even for one second because of such an illegal resolution," Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said on his website www.president.ir.

"The Iranian nation will not forget those who backed and those who rejected (the resolution), while adjusting its international relations," he said without indicating what that adjustment in ties would entail.

The adoption of the UN resolution will affect Iran's cooperation with the so-called "subsidiary arrangements" with the IAEA, spokesperson Gholamhossein Elham said on state television.

A senior Iranian nuclear official told Reuters these arrangements, accepted by Iran in 2002, meant Iran would declare any plans it had to build new atomic-related facilities.

By suspending its cooperation with this agreement, it would inform the IAEA only six months before introducing nuclear material into any new facility, said the official, who asked not to be identified.

The UN resolution goes beyond the nuclear sphere by banning Iranian exports of conventional arms and freezing financial assets abroad of 28 individuals and entities, including state-owned Bank Sepah and the commanders of the Revolutionary Guards. Some of those affected are said to be involved in supporting militant movements abroad.

The UN sanctions will stay in place until Iran halts the enrichment of uranium and the reprocessing of spent nuclear fuel, which can be used to make a bomb or to generate power.

Iran has 60 days to comply or face possible new sanctions.

Major powers have previously said negotiations on Iran's nuclear program could not begin until Tehran halts uranium enrichment.

The new measures are a follow-up to a resolution adopted on Dec. 23 banning trade in sensitive nuclear materials and ballistic missiles, as well as also freezing assets of individuals and institutions associated with atomic programs. *Reuters*

Blair: Iran's capture of UK sailors a serious issue

LONDON—BRITISH PRIME MINISTER TONY Blair warned Iran the fate of 15 British sailors and marines seized off the Iraqi coast was a "fundamental" issue for his government, as Iran suggested the group may be put on trial for violating its waters.

British Foreign Secretary Margaret Beckett spoke by telephone Sunday with Iranian Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki and reiterated her country's stance that the British sailors and marines were operating in Iraqi waters as they searched for smugglers at sea.

She asked that British diplomats be allowed to meet with the service members and demanded their safe return, the Foreign Office said. In Jerusalem, US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice also called for their release.

At a European summit in Berlin on Sunday, Blair said Iran's claim that the sailors had crossed into Iranian territorial waters "is simply not true."

"I want to get (the situation) resolved in as easy and diplomatic way as possible," Blair said, but added he hoped the Iranians "understood how fundamental an issue this is for the British government."

On a visit to the Middle East, Rice said the sailors and marines should be released immediately and said "we all fully trust the British" that they were not in Iranian waters when they were seized Friday.

But the Iranians also stuck by their view that the British had violated Iranian territory.

In New York, Mottaki said his government was considering charges against the British sailors and marines.

"The Iranian authorities intercepted these sailors and marines in Iranian waters and detained them in Iranian waters. This has happened in the past, as well," Mottaki said in Persian through a translator.

"The charge against them is illegal entrance into Iranian waters," Mottaki said. "In terms of legal issues, it's under investigation."

Mottaki declined to provide the exact coordinates of where the Britons were seized, saying this "very detailed information has been submitted to the representatives of the United Kingdom."

A spokesperson for Britain's defense ministry said they were not releasing the coordinates. *AP*

Japan PM Abe apologizes for comfort women

TOKYO—JAPANESE Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, under fire abroad for denying government involvement in forcing women to serve as wartime sex slaves, said on Monday that he was "apologizing here and now as the prime minister."

Abe said earlier this month there was no proof Japan's government or army kidnapped women to work as "comfort women," as the wartime sex slaves are known in Japan.

Abe has also said he stood by a 1993 apology known as the "Kono Statement" that acknowledged official involvement in the brothels. But he has said there would be no new apology even if US lawmakers adopted a resolution seeking one.

"I am apologizing here and now as the prime minister, and it is as stated in the Kono Statement," Abe told a parliamentary committee in response to a question by an opposition lawmaker.

The prime minister's earlier comments denying official involvement in kidnapping women, mostly Asian, to work in the wartime brothels have angered Seoul and risked straining ties with Washington, where US Congressman Michael Honda has introduced a resolution calling for Japan to make an unambiguous apology for the suffering of the sex slaves. *Reuters*

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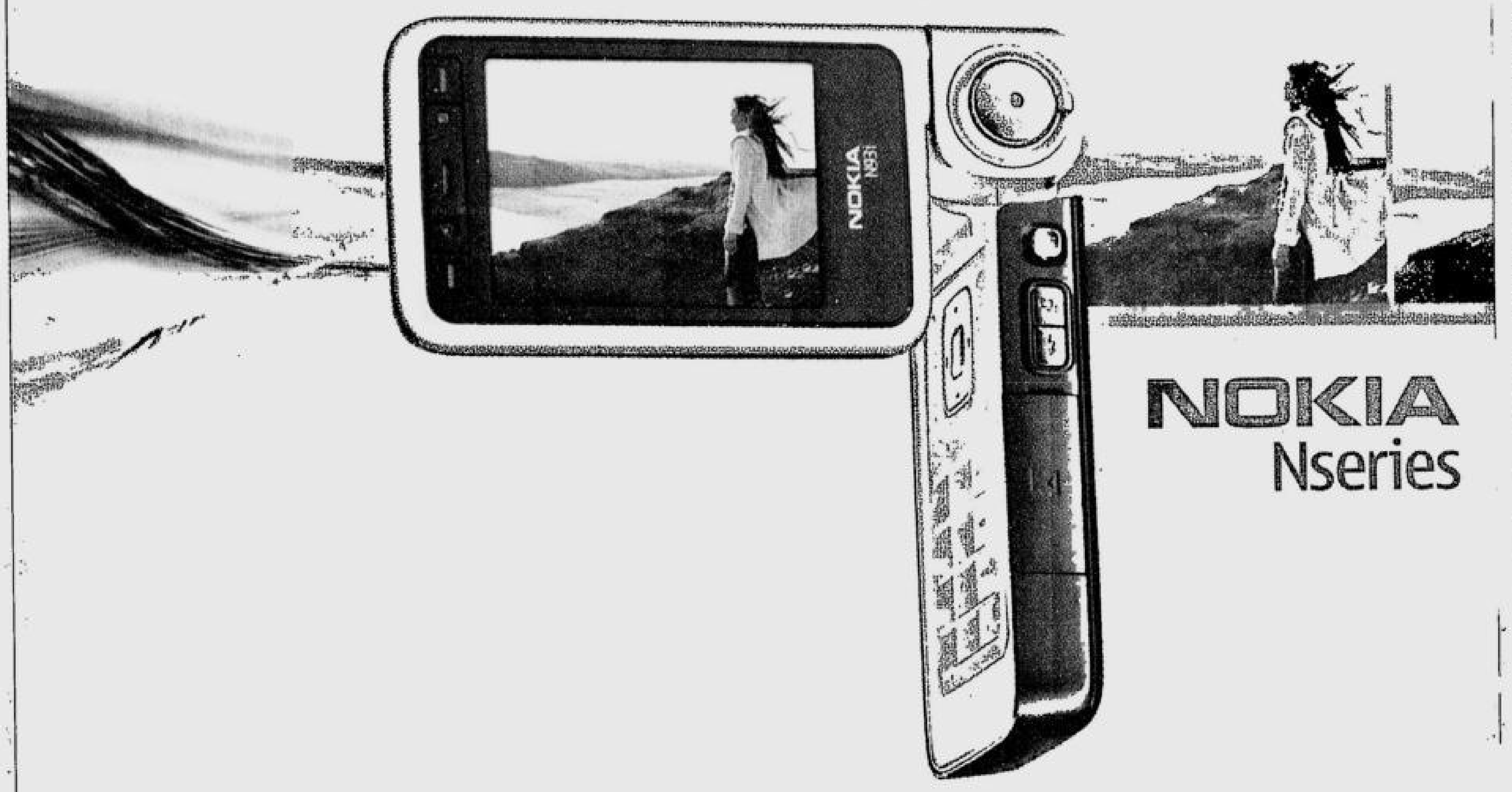

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WHAT'S INSIDE

Sharapova exacts revenge; Roddick, Nadal advance /A23

SPORTS

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Kobe misses 50 points in Lakers win /A23

Pagulayan eludes axe

Kiamco, Orcollo, Gabica lead march of favorites

WARREN Kiamco (left) contests the lag with Renemar David before the start of their match. INQUIRER PHOTO/ERIK ARAZAS

DEFENDING CHAMPION Alex Pagulayan went through the wringer before posting a 9-8 squeaker over unheralded Roland dela Cruz at the start of the 2nd BSCP National Pool Championships last night at the Ninoy Aquino Stadium in Manila.

Cagayan de Oro's Dela Cruz had earlier clustered two racks to take a 6-4 lead over Pagulayan, the 2004 World Pool champion and 2005 US Open winner, in the TV table match.

Pagulayan took the next three racks to grab the lead, 7-6, only to see Dela Cruz win the next two racks, 8-7, and move on the brink of a huge upset.

Thriving on pressure, Pagulayan swept the last two racks to send Dela Cruz into the loser's bracket.

"I nearly fell prey to an upset," said Pagulayan, who is coming off a victory in the 2007 Japan 9-Ball Open in Tokyo. "Ronald's not well known but his shots are very good."

Pagulayan will face the survivor of the match between Elvis Calasang Jr. and Benjie Guevarra Jr. in the winner's bracket today.

Earlier, three-time Southeast Asian Games gold medalist Warren Kiamco bested Renemar David, 9-5.

Jeffrey de Luna, the Doha Asian Games 9-ball silver medalist, coasted to a 9-2 victory over Rodrigo Geronimo while Bugsy stablemate Elmer Kalaquian suffered a heartbreaking 9-8 loss to unheralded John Rebong.

But the day belonged to the unheralded Jomar de Ocampo from Alaminos, Pangasinan, who upset last year's fifth placer Roland Garcia, 9-5.

In other marquee matches, Japan-based Antonio Lining blanked the youngest qualifier, 14-year-old Johann Chua, 9-0; Edgard Acaba beat Jomel Sultan, 9-2; Fidel Punzalan crushed Noel Caro, 9-5; and Jun Caro subdued Tommie Gador, 9-7.

Antonio Gabica, the Doha Asian Games 9-ball gold medalist, defeated firecracker victim Jarry Pelayo in a come-from-behind 9-8 decision.

Lee Van Corteza, the 2006 All Japan winner, also came from behind to beat Richard Pornelosa, 9-5, while Dennis Orcollo outclassed Allan Soliman, 9-1. *Marlon Bernardino, Contributor*

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Roach may be in Manny's corner

ROACH: Keen on guiding Pacquiao

CELEBRATED TRAINER FREDDIE ROACH HAS INDICATED THERE is a big chance he may be able to fly to San Antonio, Texas, to be at the corner of superstar Manny Pacquiao when he clashes with undefeated Mexican Jorge Solis on April 14 at the Alamodome.

According to Fightnews.com writer Brad Cooney, in a message posted at the Pacquiao website Pacland, Roach said there is a "very good chance" that he will be able to attend to Pacquiao and that he would discuss the possibility with Oscar De La Hoya today.

De La Hoya permission

Roach believes that De La Hoya will give him the green light to be in Pacquiao's corner, said Cooney, as the trainer plans to give the multititled fighter called Golden Boy a day off from camp on April 14 so he could fly to Texas.

Roach and De La Hoya are in the thick of their preparation for the May 5 super fight with the undefeated Floyd Mayweather Jr. at the MGM Grand Hotel and Casino, a card which will be shown live by ABS-CBN in the Philippines.

Pacquiao, meanwhile, is gearing up at the Wild Card Boxing Club in Los Angeles for his April 14 bout with the unheralded Solis, who is holed up in the mountains of northern Mexico.

Special mouthguard

Yesterday, Pacquiao was fitted with a new custom-made blue-and-yellow mouthguard especially made for him by renowned orthodontist Ed de la Vega of Canoga Park, California.

The Filipino lefty has already racked up some 80 rounds of sparring both in Gen. Santos City and in Los Angeles. He plans to be in Texas a week before the fight to attend the final press conference as well as the official weigh-in for the bout.

Solar Sports, in partnership with GMA-7, will air the Pacquiao-Solis fight in the Philippines. *Salven L. Lagumbay, Contributor*

PBA names perpetual trophy after Bernardino

MEMORIES OF A BASKETBALL MAN: Photos of the PBA's longest-serving commissioner, the late June Bernardino, on a tribute table at the St. Alphonsus de Ligouri Church at Magallanes Village, Makati City. AUGUST DELA CRUZ

PAYING TRIBUTE TO THE LATE EMILIO BERNARDINO Jr., the PBA has decided to name the Perpetual Trophy given to the champion of the Philippine Cup after the longest-serving commissioner popularly known as Jun B.

Commissioner Noli Eala said Bernardino's complete dedication to his job should be honored by naming the trophy after him.

"While deeply saddened by his untimely demise, it is the PBA's pride to name the Perpetual Trophy after the late Jun Bernardino, whose professionalism, dedication and vision in his capacity as commissioner for nine long years propelled the league to greater heights," said Eala of his well-respected predecessor.

The golden Perpetual Trophy, which costs P500,000, was crafted by world-renowned artist Ramon Orlina. The award is given to a team that wins the All-Filipino conference three times in a row.

Barangay Ginebra received a replica of the trophy when it won the recent Philippine Cup.

Bernardino died of heart attack early dawn of Saturday. He was 59.

Bernardino played for Ateneo in high school and the University of the Philippines in college before crashing the PBA as assistant coach of Tefilin.

After a brief stint with Vintage Sports where he became famous for the "Man on the Ball" segment of the TV coverage, he joined the PBA where he rose from secretary to executive director to deputy commissioner and finally to commissioner, the fifth man to head Asia's first play-for-pay league.

He ran the country's No. 1 sports league from 1994-2002, a stint that saw the PBA achieve all-time records in both attendance and gate receipts that still stand today.

Bernardino stepped down after the 2002 season, a year after suffering his first heart attack.

The PBA will hold a special tribute for Bernardino when the league celebrates its 33rd year on April 8.

In honoring Bernardino, the PBA will include the charitable institutions he had supported, such as the Kamay ni Hesus Foundation of Fr. Joey Faller, in the list of foundations the league has been helping through the years.

PBA players have begun wearing black patches on their uniforms and will do so for the duration of the Talk 'N Text Fiesta Conference.

NBC CAGING

Pacman-GS gets back at Quezon five

STANDINGS	W	L
Tagaytay	2	0
Valencia	1	0
Davao	1	0
Pagadian	2	1
GenSan	1	2
Quezon	1	4
Iloilo	0	1
Ozamiz	x	x
Iligan	x	x

GAME TODAY
(*Almendras Gym*)
12 noon—Iligan vs GenSan

DAVAO CITY—MP Pacman-Gensan got back at opening-day tormentor Quezon Villa Anita, 89-76, Saturday for its first win in the 2007 NBC National Cup basketball tournament at the Almendras gym here.

The Warriors of boxing hero Manny Pacquiao rode on the deadly inside game of Jeffrey Locsin and Rolly Menor to avenge their 64-71 loss to Quezon.

Locsin and Menor combined for 37 points and 18 rebounds as Gensan dominated the match.

Gov. Wilfredo Enverga's Quezon cagers suffered their fourth defeat in five games, including three in their Mindanao road trip.

"We played great basketball out there," said Gensan coach Ramon Pido.

Pacman's boys gun for their second straight win in four games when they meet the debuting Iligan Crusaders at 12 noon here today.

The scores:

GENSAN 89—Locsin 20, Rol Menor 17, Farochillen 15, Medalla 9, Ramos 8, Coronado 5, Tadena 3, Calo 3, Denison 3, Sumampong 2, Recustodio 2, Mejorada 2.

QUEZON 76—Gahol 16, Vilar 16, Mendoza 13, De Leon 6, Rom Menor 6, Malonzo 6, Agapito 4, Gonzales 3, De Guia 3, Drio 0, Veranga 0.

Quarters: 25-18, 47-37, 69-56, 89-76

Rock 'gives SLR little impact'

By June Navarro

WINSTON

AFTER ABSORBING ITS WORST loss in franchise history, Sta. Lucia Realty is taking a second look at import Rock Winston.

"There's no problem with Rock as far as talent is concerned," said coach Boyet Fernandez. "But he's quite small compared to the other imports and he's having a tough time competing against them."

The Lamar University star, at just a shade over 6 feet 3 inches, is the shortest among the current crop of imports in the ongoing Talk 'N Text-PBA Fiesta Cup.

Though admirable with his shooting skills, Winston is vertically challenged. Purefoods' reigning Best Import Marquin Chandler is 6-5 3/4 while Red Bull's James Penny is 6-5 7/16.

As a result, the Realtors have dropped three of their four games. Their last defeat was a harrowing 114-79 beating from defending champion Red Bull.

The possibility of replacing Winston, however, depends on the availability of the American player the Realtors are trying to get.

"He's still playing in the US," said Fernandez, who declined to name their prospect. "But we'll try to get him."

"We'll give him (Winston) two more games, then we'll evaluate whether to replace him or not," he added.

RP five leaves early to catch NBA game

THE PHILIPPINES-SAN MIGUEL BASKETBALL TEAM departs Thursday for a two-week camp in Carson City and to be able to secure tickets for the Lakers-Suns NBA game on April 8 at Staples Center in Los Angeles.

"That's the plan, and the players are trying very hard to get tickets even through the Internet," said national coach Chot Reyes, who already has two tickets courtesy of Tex Winters, assistant to Lakers coach Phil Jackson and architect of the triangle offense from their Chicago Bulls days.

To watch Steve Nash and the Phoenix Suns is what the national team is actually looking forward to, said Reyes. "It's not so much Kobe Bryant and the Lakers, because it's the Suns' game that we want to pattern ours."

Amateur slugfest on Fistorama

FOUR SLAM-BANG AMATEUR ENCOUNTERS ARE on tap in today's Fistorama program on RPN-9 starting at 10 a.m. Fistorama's amateur bouts are part of the PCSO Amateur Boxing Championships held Saturday at the Cantada Sports Center in Bagumbayan, Taguig City. The bouts, backed by PCSO, Tanduay, Hope and Mapecon, are shown worlwide twice weekly through The Filipino Channel's Kapamilya TV.

You be the judge

CLEAN LIVING

Manolo R. Iñigo

THERE'S TROUBLE BREWING BETWEEN A group of horse owners and the Philippine Racing Commission. Who is right and who is wrong?

Just recently, this group of horse owners strongly voiced its opposition to the new handicapping system which the Philracom will impose on all two- and three-year-old horses which start their careers on April 1. Under this scheme, all horses, including champion horses and the really good ones, will be categorized in one group (Class 4-Division 7B).

In this situation, the good horses will be beating the inferior horses by some 20-25 lengths with relative ease. Races will then become unexciting and the bettors will simply shy away from it.

The *bayang karerista*, the owners said, wants races where all the entries have a chance to win, not races where there will always be a sure winner.

"This is not a b---s--t industry. I love this industry," said former racing commissioner and Klub Don Juan past president Sonny Arevalo. He said this in response to Philracom chair Florencio Fianza's reported outburst recently.

Fianza, a former police general, supposedly called horseracing a "b---s--t industry" during a sectoral meeting. He is said to have also also accused some horse owners of manipulating race results by making their horses lose through the administration of illegal drugs.

Another horse owner, former racing commissioner Ramon Balatbat, was quoted by the racing magazine, Horseman's Digest, as saying, "The problems (of the horseracing industry) are more of a police matter and this is where chairman Fianza naturally fits considering his PNP background. This is the area where his help is needed most. Eradicate the illegal bookies, punish those found to have administered banned drugs (on horses) and ban erring jockeys. These, the chairman can do with an iron fist and, if successful, should be praised to high heavens."

Only recently, sales at the two racing clubs suffered tremendously due to the operation of the illegal bookies. But Metropolitan Association of Race Horse Owners (Marho) president Rep. Benhur Abalos came to the rescue by spearheading a campaign against the operators of these illegal bookies, some of whom are horse owners themselves. Now the off-track betting sales are back to normal.

* * *

Defending the Philracom move to enforce the new handicapping system, Fianza said recently that the reforms he is implementing are for the good of the industry and the best interest of the public.

"Some people may not like it," he said. "It's not the first time that I have been faced with this kind of problem, but I will continue my job the way I am empowered by the commission."

The 58-year-old Fianza added that he's ready to face the consequences of his actions, even if it meant losing his position as chair of the commission.

The new handicapping system, he said, was studied and devised to give horses a better chance at winning. How is this?

There will be about 355 two-year-olds (2YO) that will be registered this year. Granting that 160 to 170 of these horses would be able to run, they would be running only against each other and not against the whole field of active registered horses, which total about 1,500.

Statistically, there is a better chance for any horse to win. Unlike the old system of handicapping, where a horse is allowed to go down and again race with the same horses that it had already beaten, the new system will no longer allow that. Horses will only be racing against horses of the same caliber while losers will only be running against losers.

Unjust criticisms have also been hurled against the Philracom for the proliferation of illegal bookies, but the racing commission has nothing to do with the betting aspect of the industry. The matter of illegal bookies belongs to a different agency, not the Philracom.

SPORTSWATCH

Tiu looking to break 10-second barrier

THE COUNTRY'S FINEST DRIVERS ABOARD THE FASTEST CARS HEREabouts try to raise the bar anew when the 2007 San Mig Coffee Philippine Drag Racing Championship resumes with its second leg this Saturday at the Batangas Racing Circuit Drag Strip in Rosario, Batangas. Jonathan Tiu of Team Ere guns for his second straight win in the premier Quick 8 division after ruling the season opener with an explosive record-breaking feat of 10.653 seconds. And he is not done yet. "I think I could still push the car a little more and hopefully break the nine-second barrier," he said. Chief tuner Mato Tan of Matonetics still looms as his biggest foe in the races sanctioned by the Automobile Association Philippines (AAP). Tan actually broke Tiu's previous record of 10.962 thrice during practice, before Tiu improved it anew. Also aiming for back-to-back wins are Sherwin Esqguerra in the Sportsman Class and Pit 21 driver Romeo Manuel Jr. in the Hot Street division.

Riviera picked as Asia's best golf course

THE RIVIERA GOLF CLUB (LANGER COURSE) IN SILANG, CAVITE, HAS been chosen Asia's best golf course for 2006 by the Asian Golf Monthly. The prestigious honor was arrived at after thousands of entries for the 2006 poll from all over Asia made the Riviera Golf Club the winner. Three times the host of the Philippine Open, Asia's oldest professional golf tournament, the Riviera Golf Club will be officially honored for the distinctive feat this November in Singapore. "This is really a big moment for us," said retired general Celso G. Castro, the president of Riviera. "We are deeply honored, this is proof once more of the Filipino's ability to compete and win against the best in the world." Mike Sebastian, the AGM publisher and EVP for international sales and marketing, informed Castro that the award will be presented at the Gala Banquet of the Asia-Pacific Golf Development Summit 2007 on Nov. 15 in Singapore.

Heritage Cup derby at Araneta today

THE ELIMINATION PHASE OF THE FIRST HERITAGE CUP 8-COCK/BULL-stag Derby, a super cockfest with P5 million up for grabs, fires off at the Araneta Coliseum today with some 80 fights lined up. The Heritage Cup, which will go to the champion, represents sportsmanship, integrity and excellence in cockfighting, according to Rene "Boy" Diaz, president of the organizing United Gamecock Breeders Association (Ugba). Expected to figure prominently in the winners' circle today are the entries of Philippine Olympic Committee president Jose "Peping" Cojuangco, Boy Marzo, Bobby Doromal, Romy Tan, Gerry Escalona, Patrick Puno, Sundance group, Arman Santos, Obet Son, Jun Sevilla, Joseph Chua and Alex Tang, among others. The next batch of participants slug it out in Thursday's second elimination date.

BY TOP CHOICE

Race 1—(Qrt/Tri)—Quick Play (5), House Of Riches (4), Refreshing (1), Perky Perp (3)

Race 2—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Play It Again (8), Balang Bukid (10), Taning Ikaw (6), Sakura Jhay (7), Archer (9)

Race 3—(Super 6/Qrt/Tri)—El Terrible (14), Sun And Wind (10), Kapuso (13), Conquistadorsdream (3), Fordest Time (6), Conquistaroyal (9)

Race 4—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Kambro (11), Run Like D'Wind (3), Real Tough (9), Smiling Jaeda (10), Maximum Impact (2)

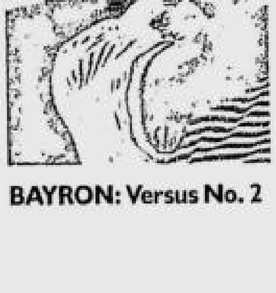
Race 5—(Super 6/Qrt/Tri)—C Tonet (9), Dashing (13), Selfmade (10), High Pocket (8), Ocean Cookie (4), Mr. Bonjing (12)

Race 6—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Yankee Clipper (3), Nico's Incharge (2), Gutsy (6), Vhingget (8), Astimegoesby (10)

Race 7—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Passing Through (4), Strong Boy (8), EJ Forever (9), Mes Monique (5), Playmaker (3)

Race 8—(Super 6/Qrt/Tri)—Concorde (13), En Gedi (8), King Aljhun (11), Take Ten (3), Angel Sky (9), Road Runner (4)

Bayron makes it to match play


BAYRON: Versus No. 2

JAY BAYRON HUNG TOUGH IN THE closing holes to card a 71, then nipped two others in sudden death to claim one of the last two spots in the match play phase of the 2007 Australian Amateur Championship at the North South Wales Golf Club in La Perouse, Sydney Monday.

Given up for lost after dropping to 43rd in the third round of the 72-hole stroke play tournament Saturday, Bayron stayed focused in the final round to finish with a 288.

He was actually tied with three others for the last two berths of the 32-player match play cast but Bayron beat Brendan Smith of New South Wales and Briton Seve Benson on the third playoff hole to join Jay Leigh Deagan of Victoria into the tournament proper.

The 27-year-old Bayron, spearhead of the ICTSI-backed national pool, took the 31st slot and drew the No. 2 finisher, Scott Arnold of NSW, in the match play event beginning Tuesday.

Arnold had lost to eventual stroke play topnotcher Andrew Dodt of Queensland in another thrilling playoff duel after both finished at 276.

Bayron is one of only two Asians who advanced, the other being Singaporean Choo Tze Huang, who wound up in joint 25th after a 71.

Kobe misses 50 in LA win

KOBE BRYANT: 43 Points

LOS ANGELES—KOBE BRYANT missed out on a fifth consecutive 50-point game but still managed to register 43 points in the Los Angeles Lakers' 115-113 home victory over the Golden State Warriors on Sunday.

The win was the fifth straight for the Lakers, who used a 14-0 run in the fourth quarter to overturn a 98-90 deficit.

Bryant hit 15 of 33 shots and made 9 of 11 free throws, but the Lakers were ineffective in getting him the ball for much of the second and third quarters.

Lamar Odom added 24 points and 19 rebounds for the home side while Monta Ellis led the Warriors with 31.

A sub-par second quarter, in which Bryant scored only four points, cost the shooting guard a chance to join Wilt Chamberlain as the only NBA players to score 50 or more points in five straight games.

Bryant started strongly, collecting 17 points against the Warriors in the first quarter, seven of them in a 44-second burst.

But he took only four shots in the second quarter, hitting two of them, to end the first half with 21 points.

A 10-point third quarter left Bryant needing 19 points in the final period to keep the streak alive. He got 12.

Bryant had become only the second player in NBA history to score 50 or more points in four consecutive games when he hit an even 50 against the New Orleans Hornets on Friday.

Only Chamberlain has had a better streak. He scored 50 or more points in seven consecutive games with Philadelphia in 1961 and reached the mark in five consecutive games with San Francisco the next season.

NBA on TV today
9 a.m.—Washington vs Utah
(replays at 4 p.m. and 9:30 p.m.)

Bryant began his high-scoring streak with 65 points against Portland on March 16. He added 50 more against Minnesota on March 18 and scored 60 against Memphis on Thursday.

Jason Terry scored 15 of his 27 points in the fourth quarter as the Dallas Mavericks won their sixth straight game, a 104-97 road victory over the Atlanta Hawks. Dirk Nowitzki and Josh Howard both had 28 points for the NBA-leading Mavericks.

Chris Paul had 28 points and David West 23 as the New Orleans Hornets snapped the Houston Rockets's five-game winning streak with a 106-94 victory.

The Denver Nuggets scored the game's final eight points to beat the Cavaliers 105-93 in Cleveland. Carmelo Anthony had four points in the run and finished with 27 overall.

Mike Bibby hit a franchise-record nine three-pointers in scoring 37 points and the Sacramento Kings surprised the visiting Phoenix Suns 107-100.

Ben Gordon closed out a 31-point performance with a fade-away jumper with two seconds remaining in the Chicago Bulls's 92-90 road win at Indiana. *Reuters*

Florida, Georgetown barge into Final Four

ST. LOUIS—JOAKIM NOAH had 14 points and 14 rebounds and led the defending champion University of Florida back to US college basketball's Final Four, beating Oregon, 85-77, Sunday as the semifinal field was completed.

Lee Humphrey made seven 3-pointers and Taurean Green added 21 points to lead the Gators to their 16th straight post-season victory, a stretch that includes last year's national championship and two Southeastern Conference titles.

Florida next faces UCLA in Atlanta in a rematch of last year's championship game. Georgetown plays Ohio State in the other semifinal.

Florida beat UCLA last year in a rout, 73-57, for its first national championship.

In East Rutherford, New Jersey, Georgetown overcame an 11-point deficit in the second half, then scored 14 straight points in overtime to stun the top-seeded Tar Heels for its first trip to the Final Four since 1985.

The Hoyas were helped by an amazing collapse from Carolina (31-7), which made only one of 23 field goal attempts, including its first 12 in overtime, over a 15 minute-span.

The Tar Heels actually had a chance to win in regulation, but freshman Wayne Ellington missed an open jumper from the wing in the final second.

Jeff Green led Georgetown with 22 points and freshman DaJuan Summers added 20.

Tyler Hansbrough had 26 points and 11 rebounds for the Tar Heels. *AP*

BEST SEAG PERFORMER: US-based Filipino Jackie Pangilinan en route to a 1:12.67 clocking in the morning heat of the 100-meter breaststroke in the 12th FINA World Championships at Rod Laver Arena in Melbourne, Australia. The 20-year-old Pangilinan of Harvard University landed 33rd overall to emerge best finisher among Southeast Asian Games bets. SEA Games triple gold medalist Miguel Molina timed 1:52.67 in the 200-meter freestyle heats, also the best among regional entries. AP

PCU ban remote—Atayde

By Marc Anthony Reyes

WE DON'T WANT PHILIPPINE Christian University suspended.

This was the sentiment of St. Benilde's Henry Atayde, chief of the NCAA investigation bodies probing on alleged irregularities committed by the Dolphins during the past season.

But Atayde said the decision on what penalty to impose against PCU—if proven guilty—would depend on the NCAA management committee and policy board.

Sources, however, said suspension is farthest from the mind of the NCAA board considering the strength of the PCU athletes and the fact that rival UAAP will be opening to a complete field with the comeback of suspended La Salle.

PCU is the general champion in the seniors division and runner-up in the high school category. The Baby Dolphins, who have five players under questioned, finished second to San Sebastian last season.

"We will give PCU due process," said Atayde, adding that PCU will be asked to present the findings of its own investigation before the league will come up with its own conclusion.

Dacanay, Mapilisan UAAP's top athletes

By Jasmine W. Payo

A SEVEN-GOLD MEDAL HAUL SEALED IT for swimming ace Luica Gaudes Dacanay.

A homegrown talent from the University of the Philippines, Dacanay edged 25 other top varsity standouts to capture the 69th UAAP Athlete of the Year plum for the second straight season.

"I'm really surprised," said Dacanay after the UAAP Annual Awards on Sunday night at the University of the East Theatre. "I have two more years in the UAAP and I plan to keep on training."

Dacanay, swimming's Most Valuable Player this season, ruled the 50-meter and 100m butterfly, 50m, 100m and 200m backstroke, and the 200m and 400m individual medley.

The junior Family Life and Child Development student also received a citation for winning two golds in the 50m and 100m backstroke during the Asean University Games.

In the junior division, taekwondo jin Nicole Mapilisan of University of Santo Tomas copped the Athlete of the Year award.

UST also bagged the junior and senior overall championships after highlighting its campaign with senior title sweeps in men and women's basketball, lawn tennis and taekwondo.

"We would like to share this award to our athletes who showed hard work and determination to give glory to the school," said UST board representative Fr. Ermito de Sagon.

The junior and senior MVPs in 13 sports were also recognized, along with the outstanding student-athletes and players who saw action in international competitions.

"The UAAP has continued to honor sports heroes who inculcate hard work, integrity, discipline and team work," said UE president Ester Garcia.

MARIA Sharapova struts her stuff against Venus Williams AP

Sharapova exacts revenge; Roddick, Nadal advance

MIAMI—MARIA SHARAPOVA rallied to avenge a Wimbledon defeat with a three-set victory over Venus Williams on Sunday, but she had to wait another day to see if she'll get a similar chance against Serena Williams.

Top-seeded Sharapova beat Venus Williams 2-6, 6-2, 7-5 to reach the fourth round of the $6.9-million WTA and ATP Masters Series tournament here.

Sharapova was next due to face either Australian Open champion Serena Williams or Czech Lucie Safarova.

But the scheduled night match between Serena and Safarova was postponed until Monday when rain struck again, leaving Sharapova to wait and see if she'll get a chance to avenge her Australian Open finals rout.

Sharapova was joined in the fourth round by second-seeded Belgian Justine Henin, No. 3 Svetlana Kuznetsova and No. 4 Kim Clijsters of Belgium, while fifth-seeded Swiss Martina Hingis exited in the third round for the second straight year.

Henin rallied to beat Virginie Razzano of France 6-2, 2-6, 7-6 (7/5).

Kuznetsova, the defending champion, advanced with a 6-4, 6-2 victory over Jelena Kostanic, while Clijsters booked a fourth-round date with China's Li Na by besting Australian Samantha Stosur 6-4, 6-2. Li routed Slovenia's Katarina Srebotnik, 6-0, 6-1, while Hingis fell to Poland's Agnieszka Radwanska 4-6, 6-3, 6-2.

In men's action, second-seeded Rafael Nadal of Spain and No. 3 Andy Roddick of the United States advanced to the fourth round. Nadal was handed a walkover after Belgium's Olivier Rochus withdrew with a foot injury and Roddick defeated Gilles Simon of France, 6-4, 6-4. AFP

Ochoa hangs on to clinch Safeway title

OCHOA

SUPERSTITION Mountain, Arizona—Mexico's Lorena Ochoa squandered a big lead but bounced back to claim her first victory of 2007 at the $1.5-million Safeway International on Sunday.

The 2006 LPGA Player of the Year, Ochoa overcame a six-stroke swing to claim the title.

After winning six tournaments last season, Ochoa claimed her 10th career title with a final round 68, beating Norwegian Suzann Pettersen by two strokes.

Ochoa had a four-day total of 18-under 270.

Jennifer Rosales of the Philippines carded a 75 and tumbled to a tie for 42nd spot at 290.

Ochoa, 25, led by four strokes entering the final round but fell two behind Pettersen when the Norwegian struck early with four birdies in a row from the second.

"You know what, I had no idea what position I was in," Pettersen said. "That was one of my goals today. I said to the people around me, 'I'm not going to watch the leaderboard today.' So, the first time I actually saw the leaderboard was on the 18th green." Ochoa, however, knew just what was happening when Peterssen made her run.

"I was watching the leaderboard," Ochoa said. "Suzann at the start was amazing. She's a great player, and I want to say it's a great run and congratulations for her.

"She put a lot of pressure on me. I was feeling good. I was feeling fine with my game." Ochoa bounced back with four birdies in five holes from the 14th on to rally for the win. *AFP*

Tiger settles for 2-stroke WGC victory

MIAMI—TIGER WOODS BECAME only the fourth man to win the same elite event six times, winning the eight million-dollar World Golf Championships CA Championship here Sunday despite an inconsistent final round.

World number one Woods fired a one-over par 73 to finish 72 holes at Doral's famed Blue Monster on 10-under par 278, two strokes ahead of runner-up Brett Wetterich for his 13th triumph in 24 WGC starts.

"Conditions were not easy," Woods said. "I had to grind it out. I had a hard time reading greens and making putts. I had a tough time out there."

In his final tuneup before the Masters, Woods made a double title defense, having won the US PGA event at Doral the past two years and taken this event last year in England when it was known as the American Express Championship.

Reigning British Open and PGA Championship winner Woods, 31, won his 56th career PGA victory, fifth on the all-time list behind Sam Snead's record 82 and only six shy of Arnold Palmer's fourth-place lifetime tour total.

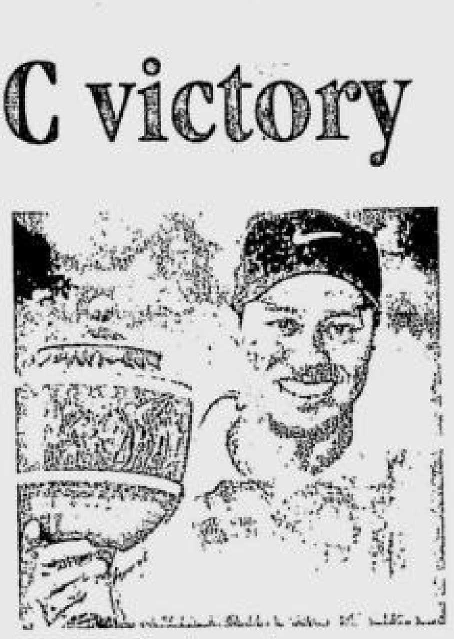
Only US legend Snead has dominated a single tournament more than Woods has owned this event, which he also won in 1999, 2002, 2003, 2005 and 2006.

Woods also became the first player to win five different events on the US PGA Tour at least three times in a row, having also done so at Bay Hill, the Memorial, the World Golf Invitational and the Buick Invitational.

It was the second victory of the season for Woods, who won his third Buick Invitational in January at Torrey Pines. He joined Fiji's Vijay Singh as the only two-time winners on the US tour this year.

In addition, he bounced back from a 22nd-place finish at last week's Arnold Palmer Invitational.

It was Woods' 39th victory in 42 times leading after 54 holes *AFP*



WOODS: Simply superb AFP

Fistiana fight card: Team effort for disabled boxers

THEY GO INTO THE SUNSET OF THEIR careers bedridden and broke, unable to fend for themselves or feed their families.

Their former handlers have abandoned them long ago, and some of these disabled gladiators subsist on meager earnings from menial jobs—if they can still hack it.

The sad plight of the disabled pro boxers is not lost on their old ally, the Philippine Sportswriters Association (PSA), which is reviving a popular fight card to raise funds to help set up livelihood projects for them.

In cooperation with the City of Manila and the Games and Amusement Board (GAB), the PSA will hold the Fiesta Fistiana boxing festival on April. 19 at the Rajah Sulaiman Park in Manila's Baywalk.

In his last act as chair of the Manila Sports Council, Arnold "Ali" Atienza provided the venue for the benefit fight card and worked with some of the country's major sports supporters to ensure the success of the project which the PSA started in 1955.

"We take this opportunity to partner with the PSA for this laudable endeavor to support retired and disabled boxers," said Atienza, son of Manila Mayor Lito Atienza.

The elder Atienza, himself a rabid fan of boxing, is opening the event to the public.

"The Rajah Sulaiman Park has hosted a couple of boxing events since its rehabilitation to become one of the major parks in Manila," said the mayor. "With the Fiesta Fistiana, we expect a record attendance when it is held there for the first time."

GAB Chair Eric Buhain also assured the availability of some of the country's leading boxers for the fund raiser.

"We have lined up some very interesting matches," said Buhain.

Dr. Nasser Cruz, GAB medical chief and head of the ratings division, pitted champion Alex Escaner against No. 3 Jake Verano for the RP super-bantam championship.

Two supporting bouts feature RP No. 2 strawweight Denver Cuello against No. 3 Arman dela Cruz and RP No. 4 super bantam Jun Talape versus Johnny Lear, also listed in the latest GAB ranking as No. 4.

Inquirer Sports Staff

NESTEA BEACH VOLLEY

Visayas qualifying on

By June Navarro

TWO FORMER MEN'S DIVISION CHAMPIONS and an ex-titleholder in the women's bracket will be represented in the Visayas qualifying of the 2007 Nestea Beach Volley tournament which fires off today at the La Salle Green Hills sandcourt.

Ten schools from the region hope to seize three slots each in the men's and women's divisions in the national championships to be held on April 19-21 in the island of Boracay.

Back to seek another crack at the men's title are Foundation, which won in 2001, and San Jose Recoletos, the winner in 2002 and 2004.

The former women's champion, Southwestern, is the winningest team in the event's 11-year history, having won the title in 2003, 2004 and 2005.

Southwestern also made it to the finals last year only to absorb a stunning loss to St. Benilde.

The other competing teams from the Visayas are Iloilo Doctors College, Southwestern U, University of Negros Occidental Recoletos, St. La Salle Bacolod, University of San Agustin, University of San Carlos, University of Southern Philippines Foundation and University of the Visayas.

The Luzon eliminations were held last week with Far Eastern U, Philippine Christian U and St. Francis of Assisi nailing the three Boracay slots in men's play, and FEU, Lyceum and Adamson advancing in the women's side.

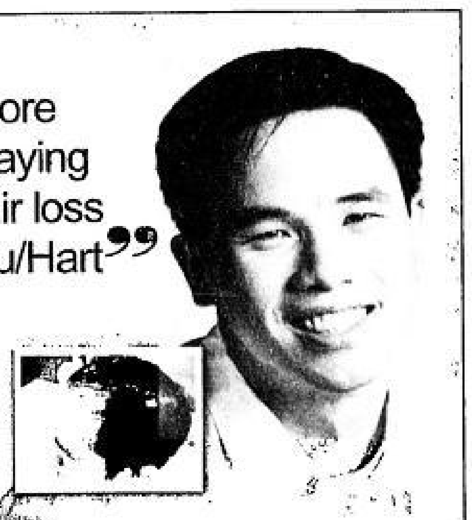
Failing to survive were defending men's national champion Adamson and 2006 women's winner St. Benilde.

Six teams from Mindanao, which will hold its eliminations later this week, will complete the Boracay field.

In Boracay, the nine teams from each division will fight for the P150,000 winner's purse. The winning coaches will also receive a cash prize of P50,000 this time.

TRIATHLON IN DAVAO: Officers of the Triathlon Association of Davao (Triad), led by its president Maritess del Rosario, are inducted to office by Triathlon Association of the Philippines (Trap) president Tom Carrasco Jr. during the recent inaugural leg of the Speedo-National Age Group Triathlon Series in Davao City.

"More and more Filipinos are saying goodbye to hair loss—thanks to Nu/Hart"



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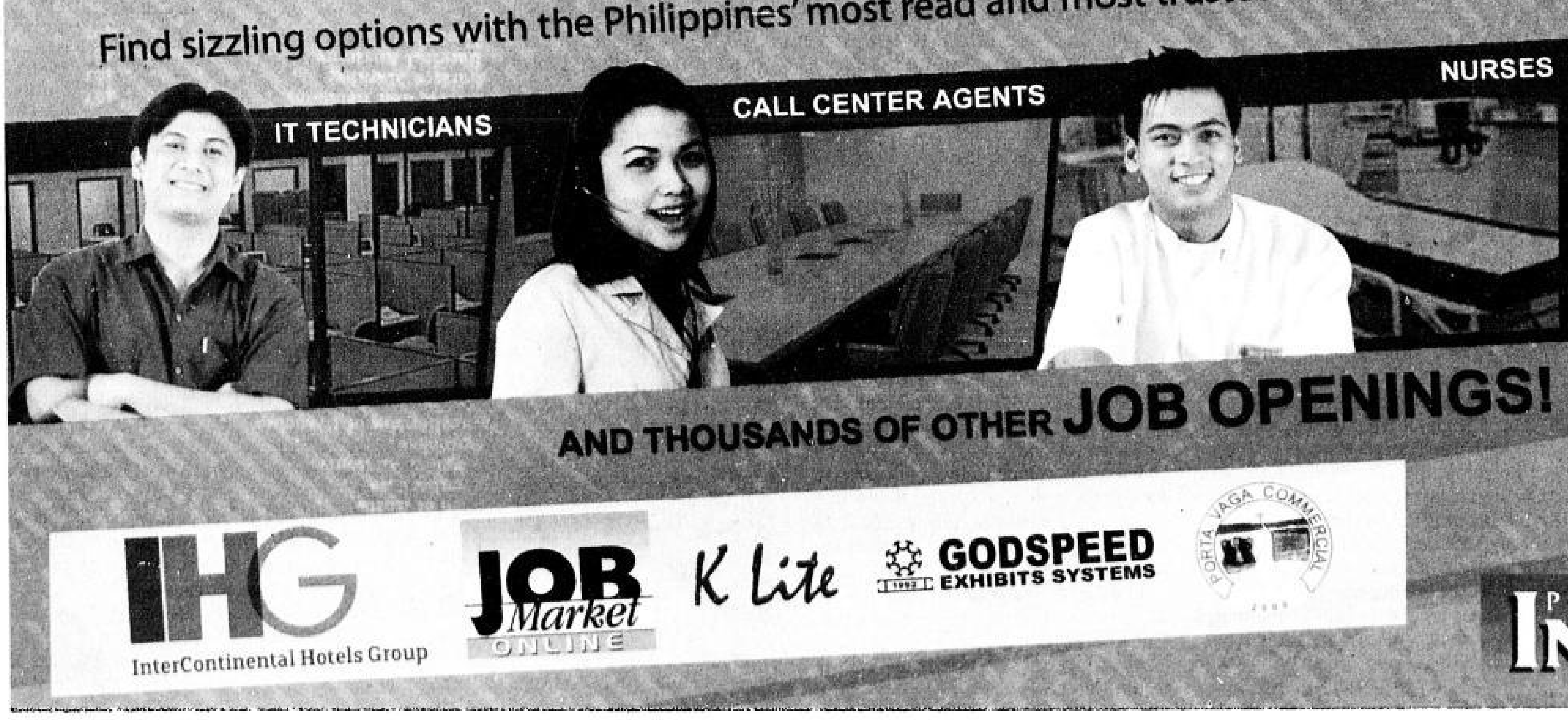

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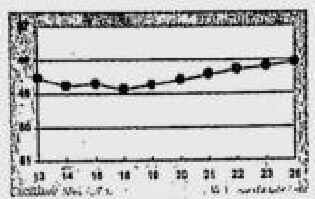

MARCH

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As of 5 p.m., March 26, 2007

STOCK MARKET

Stocks close lower

SHARE PRICES CLOSED 0.63-percent lower yesterday as cautious investors locked in profits

STOCKS/ B2

DOTC hit for 'bias' in $240-M project

Firm claims agency favoring Chinese group

By Daxim L. Lucas

A FOREIGN FIRM THAT HAS OFFERED TO BUILD A NATIONAL broadband network (NBN) for the government is questioning the Department of Transportation and Communications' (DOTC) alleged bias for a Chinese company that offered to build the same facility at a later date and at a more expensive price.

At stake is a contract to build an integrated landline, cellular and Internet network for the government worth anywhere from $240 million to $262 million, depending on which proposal would be chosen.

In a letter to Transportation and Communications Secretary Leandro Mendoza last week, Amsterdam Holdings Inc. (AHI) said that their own NBN proposal should be given due evaluation first instead of just going ahead with another NBN proposal by Chinese company.ZTE that came later.

In December 2006, AHI filed an unsolicited proposal with the government through the DOTC to build a national broadband network under a Build-Own-Operate (BOO) scheme. The AHI proposal has a project cost of $240 million to be financed privately.

Under the AHI proposal, all of the government's agencies can use half of their proposed network's capacity while the private sector component will use the other half to subsidize the cost of the government's telecommunication costs.

On the other hand, Chinese telecommunications supplier ZTE filed another unsolicited proposal with the DOTC last month to build a national broadband network under a $262-million government-to-government loan agreement.

Under the Chinese proposal, ZTE will build the network and transfer it to the DOTC for it to operate.

According to AHI, the Philippine government would have to take out a loan from the

DOTC/ B4

IN THIS ISSUE

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- **Bangko Sentral** seen further easing foreign exchange policies /B6

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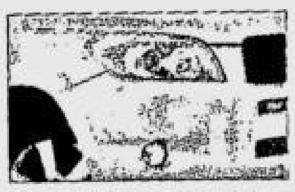
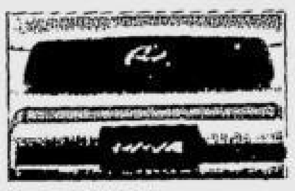


New Projector Headlamps with Front Foglamps



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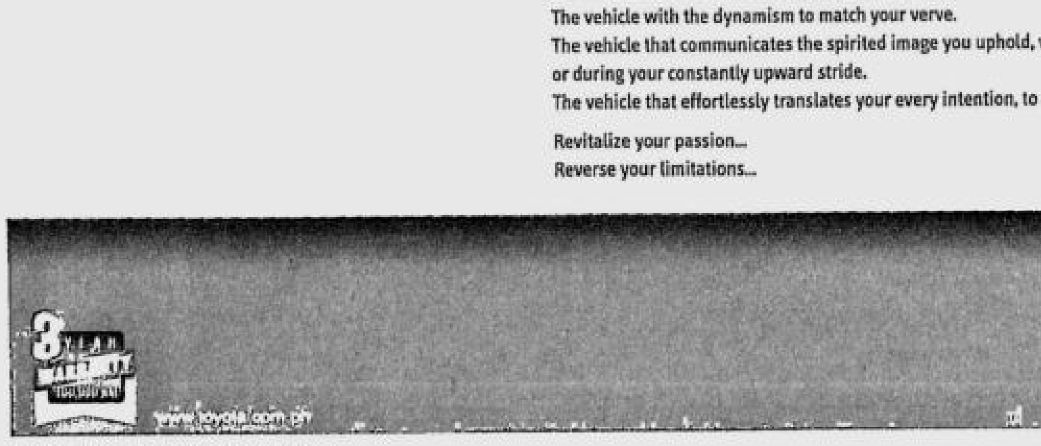

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Aboitiz subsidiary sells ₱2B in bad loans to Deutche Bank

By Doris C. Dumlao

Also raising $100M through sale of stocks

THE ABOITIZ GROUP'S UNION Bank of the Philippines has entered into a deal to sell P 2.04 billion worth of bad loans to Deutsche Bank AG London.

The agreement, approved last March 23 by Union Bank's board of directors, was disclosed by the bank to the Philippine Stock Exchange yesterday.

Union Bank, which recently acquired International Exchange Bank, is also raising $100 million in capital through the sale of new shares in the stock market.

The bank's merger with iBank will create the country's seventh biggest private universal bank with assets of about P170 billion and a combined network of 191 branches.

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas expects banks to unload bad assets more aggressively in the coming months as the extended special purpose vehicle law will expire next year.

Stiffer accounting and capital adequacy requirements have likewise given banks like UnionBank more reason to clean up their books.

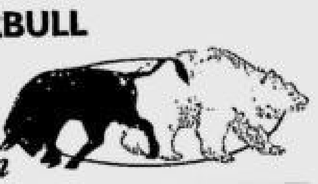
The new Supreme Court resolution that speeds up foreclosure proceedings is also seen allowing banks to sell bad assets at a better price.

In a recent en banc resolution, the Supreme Court amended the procedures in extra-judicial or judicial foreclosure by making it more difficult for complainants to seek temporary restraint or court injunction without basis.

The Bankers' Association of the Philippines said these reforms in foreclosure proceedings would even have a more significant impact in strengthening the banking system's financial conditions than the fiscal incentives granted by the SPV law itself.

Year of the Pig brings more pork

MR. BEARBULL



Ron Nathan

FIRE RAZES COMELEC; GMA RAISES GDP.

I was fast asleep at 2 a.m. when a man knocked on the door and said, "There are 6 men beating up your mother-in -law. Are you going to help?" "No", I said. "Six should be enough."

At school, my daughter wrote, "Noah built an Ark. He had a wife named Joan, who was known as Joan of Ark."

I rang the office of SINO to ask why the shares went limit up.

The operator asked who I was.

"Mr. Bearbull of the INQUIRER."

SINO?

HERE ARE SOME STOCK EXCHANGE TERMS:

Momentum investing—buying high and selling low.

Value investing—buying low and selling lower.

P/E ratio—the percentage of investors wetting their pants as the market crashes.

Standard & Poor—your life in a nutshell.

Bull market—a random movement causing an investor to mistake himself for a financial genius.

Bear market—A 6- to 18-month period when the kids get no allowance, the wife gets no jewelry and the husband gets no sex.

Stock split—when your ex-wife and lawyer split all your assets between them.

Market correction—the day after you buy stocks.

Cash flow—the movement your money makes as it disappears down the toilet.

Institutional investor—long term investor now in the nuthouse.

* * *

WALL STREET and the whole of the Asian region rose to a 3-week high after the FED abandoned its bias toward higher interest rates. The shift indicates that officials may have concluded that the risk of a deeper recession in the housing market might make it harder to raise rates to bring down inflation more quickly. While the FED described inflation as "elevated," some traders interpreted the new language to signal a rate cut as soon as June. I think they are being over-optimistic.

A chief economist said, "They are going to have a lot more room to maneuver in case the housing situation spins out of control. The FED will be patient with inflation. They will not make any preemptive move until they get a better feel on the economy." As expected, the rates were unchanged at 5.25 percent.

Bernanke indicated that the housing market has not stabilized since they met in January. Since then, reports show a jump in mortgage delinquencies to a 3 ½-year high last quarter, driven by late payments on the riskiest loans, and the highest number of foreclosures since March 2004. The spillover effects from development in the housing market on consumer spending might become more pronounced than forecast. The FED stressed that they were not abandoning the fight against inflation saying that the "predominant policy concern' is that inflation might fail to moderate.

Capacity in factories rose to its highest since 2000 and unemployment fell to 4.5 percent, approaching a 5-year low. "The level of resource utilization has the potential to sustain inflation. "Meanwhile, the Commerce Department cut its estimate of 4th quarter growth from 3.5 percent to 2.2 percent. Signs of weakness deepened in investment and shipments of non-defense capital goods excluding aircraft slumped 2.7 percent.

Investors were euphoric about the FED's statement but I think they are wrong because there is another problem. Over the past 14 quarters, profits year-on-year have grown at double digits, mostly 12-14 percent. However, in 2007, the energy sector is expected to fall 2 percent on lower oil prices. Downward revisions to technology are forecast to decline from 17 percent to 12 percent. The consumer sector is expected to fall 4 percent and overall, the S&P 500 index is expected to produce earnings growth of only 7.3 percent, down from 9.3 percent in January and 10.4 percent last year.

Once earnings grow by single digits, existing Price/Earnings ratios will be judged to be too high and this means that stock prices will decline. With a possible housing slump and single-digit earnings, I see no case for optimism on Wall Street. I am not forecasting a crash but do not think the market is going to make much headway this year. It is flat so far this year.

In the home market, there are a number of IPOs and secondary offerings. The IPO of Pacific Online is so small that it will be impossible to get shares unless your broker loves you. There are offerings from several companies and rights issue pending from GEO, OM and VUL. Everybody is raising money while the economy is awash with liquidity. Yields on bonds are so low that investors have diverted their funds to equities.

In London, our market is very sophisticated and we differentiate between primary offerings and secondary offerings. A primary offer is from the company to the public and all money goes to the company in order to expand or pay off debt. In other words, the company benefits. A secondary offer is when existing shareholders sell part of their shares to the public. This is not a crime and they are free to do so but the money goes to them and not to the company. In general, primary offers are received better than secondary offers.

I have been telling investors to buy ATLAS MINING on the chart breakout. It has been trying to break P10 its par value, for months but on Thursday, it succeeded and closed at P11 so I marked it in the newsletter as a BREAKOUT. On Friday, it closed at P11.50 and now it is P12.75. There are already monthly shipments of nickel and by November, there will also be copper shipments as well. The large debt will be converted into equity and our Research Department is in the process of evaluating it. I buy on the charts first and look into the fundamentals later. Usually, there is a correlation.

Before attending the G7 meeting I will send Bernanke a G3 razor. I don't like your whiskers and moustache you to remove them.

mrbearbull@hotmail.com

Basic Petroleum eyes Mindanao biofuels firm

By Abigail L. Ho

LISTED FIRM BASIC PETROLEUM Inc. is training its sights on the renewable and alternative energy industry, initially with the acquisition of Zambo Norte BioEnergy Corp. (ZNBC) for P120 million.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange, Basic Petroleum said its board approved last Friday the acquisition of ZNBC, developer, owner and operator of a proposed sugar cane farm and ethanol plant in Zamboanga del Norte.

The company, a wholly owned subsidiary of ZN Biofuels Partners Inc., plans to develop a 9,000-hectare sugar cane farm and put up a fully integrated ethanol plant with a capacity of 200,000 liters a day.

Basic Petroluem vice president and corporate secretary Carlos Rosales said the P120 million would be payable partly in Basic Petroleum shares, priced at 44 centavos a share, and the balance in cash.

The shares would be taken from the unsubscribed and unissued portion of Basic Petroleum's capital stock, he said.

Of the P120 million, a little more than P10.8 million will be payable in cash, with 50 percent of the amount payable upon signing of the memorandum of understanding between the two companies and the balance payable under terms to be agreed upon and provided in the MOU.

The noncash part would be covered by 248.12 million Basic Petroleum shares worth almost P109.2 million.

Rosales said the MOU between the two parties was still being finalized.

Due diligence would be conducted by Basic Petroleum-appointed third-party consultants to cover the technical, legal and financial aspects of the transaction, he added.

The acquisiton would be subject to the approval of Basic Petroleum's stockholders, as well as by concerned regulatory agencies.

CURRENCIES

March 26, 2007 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.752672	1.000000	48.1740
Japan	Yen	0.006375	0.008470	0.4080
United Kingdom	Pound	1.477044	1.962400	94.5367
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.096369	0.128036	6.1680
Switzerland	Franc	0.617704	0.820681	39.5355
Canada	Dollar	0.648519	0.861623	41.5078
Singapore	Dollar	0.496289	0.659370	31.7645
Australia	Dollar	0.606358	0.805607	38.8093
Bahrain	Dinar*	1.996530	2.652590	127.7859
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.200723	0.266681	12.8471
Brunei	Dollar	0.494658	0.657203	31.6601
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000083	0.000110	0.0053
Thailand	Baht	0.023448	0.031153	1.5008
UAE	Dirham	0.204987	0.272346	13.1200
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.328600	64.0040
Korea	Won	0.000804	0.001068	0.0514
China	Yuan**	0.097396	0.129400	6.2337
Argentina	Peso	0.243033	0.322893	15.5550
Brazil	Real	0.364667	0.484496	23.3401
Denmark	Kroner	0.134229	0.178336	8.5912
India	Rupee	0.017354	0.023057	1.1107
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.217913	0.289519	13.9473
Mexico	New Peso	0.068313	0.090761	4.3723
New Zealand	Dollar	0.535595	0.711592	34.2802
South Africa	Rand	0.104130	0.138347	6.6647
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.022780	0.030266	1.4580

Source: Reuters' forex closing prices as of NY Time—March 23, 2007

* Various banks in Bahrain as quoted in Reuters' Screen. ** Asian time closing rate as of March 23, 2007

Stocks close lower

From page B1

while waiting for a fresh positive lead, dealers said.

The composite index finished 20.01 points lower at 3,150.04 after trading between 3,146.25 and 3,181.40.

The broader all-share index fell 8.64 points or 0.42 percent to 2,029.45.

Gains and declines were even at 55 each, with 40 stocks unchanged. Turnover was 6.58 billion shares worth P2.89 billion.

"There are no new positive developments to perk up sentiment and some investors may be winding down their positions ... ahead of the Easter break next week," said Lawrence de Leon of Accord Capital Equities.

"The focus was mainly on the third liners, particularly mining, and volumes are weak, indicating the lack of interest," he added. *AFP*

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of March 26, 2007)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
FINANCIAL					
BANKS					
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	10.25	10.5	10.25	10.5	14,900
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	58.5	58.5	57.5	58	2,816,200
Bank of the Phil. Islands	65.5	65.5	65	65	1,942,000
Citystate Savings Bank	20	20	20	20	300
Export and Ind. Bank A	0.56	0.56	0.54	0.55	3,100,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	101	101	100	101	322,100
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	62	62	60.5	61	1,043,700
Phil. Bank of Comm. A	50	50	50	50	300
Philippine National Bank	47	48	47	48	39,000
Phil. Savings Bank	60	62	60	62	2,000
Security Bank Corp.	78	78	77.5	77.5	4,900
OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS					
Citisecoline.Com Inc.	7	7.1	7	7	1,167,000
First Metro Invest. Corp.	38	38	38	38	1,000
Manulife Financial Corp.	1620	1620	1620	1620	130
Phil. Stock Exchange Inc.	660	670	660	665	4,400
Sun Life Financial Inc.	2150	2155	2150	2155	1,300
Ivantage Corp.	1.58	1.58	1.56	1.56	299,000
ELECTRICITY, ENERGY, POWER & WATER					
PNOC Energy Dev. Corp.	6.2	6.2	6.1	6.2	7,840,000
First Gen Corp.	55	55.5	55	55.5	970,900
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	70.5	70.5	70	70	96,500
Manila Electric Co. A	70.5	70.5	69.5	70	96,000
Manila Electric Co. B	70.5	70.5	69.5	70	476,000
Manila Water Co. Inc.	9.3	9.3	9.3	9.3	619,000
Petron Corp.	4.5	4.55	4.45	4.5	4,395,000
East Asia Power Res. Corp.	0.29	0.33	0.29	0.31	2,740,000
Salcon Power Corp.	1.9	1.9	1.9	1.9	9,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	1.4	1.44	1.4	1.42	128,000
FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	3.8	4.05	3.8	4.05	111,000
CADP Group Corp.	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.7	3,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	25	25	25	25	10,000
Jollibee Foods Corp.	56	56	55	55	145,000
RFM Corp.	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	25,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	2.55	2.6	2.5	2.5	292,000
Swift Food Inc.	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	10,000
San Miguel Corp. A	64.5	64.5	64.5	64.5	41,100
San Miguel Corp. B	73.5	74	72.5	73	215,500
Alliance Tuna Int'l, Inc.	2.38	2.4	2.26	2.26	1,796,000
Universal Robina Corp.	17.25	17.25	17	17	4,609,200
CONSTRUCTION, INFRASTRUCTURE & ALLIED SERVICES					
Southeast Asian Cement	1.72	1.72	1.7	1.7	11,463,000
Engineering Equip. Inc.	4.65	4.75	4.55	4.65	9,066,000
Holcim Philippines Inc.	8.7	8.7	8.7	8.7	60,000
CHEMICALS					
Chemrez Technologies Inc.	5.1	5.1	5	5	1,196,000
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	0.71	0.78	0.71	0.78	480,000
DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS					
Picop Resources Inc.	0.34	0 38	0.34	0.36	25,980,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.015	0.016	0.015	.015	1,028,000,000
Abacus Con Res & Hdg B	0.015	0.017	0.015	0.016	114,700,000
Ayala Corp.	560	560	540	545	162,540
Alsons Cons. Res. Inc.	0.96	0.96	0.9	0.93	1,880,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	8.2	8.2	8.1	8.1	458,000
Alliance Global Group Inc.	7	7	6.7	6.7	788,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.0725	0.0725	0.07	0.07	56,500,000
A. Soriano Corp.	3.5	3.5	3.45	3.5	736,000
APC Group Inc.	0.42	0.42	0.4	0.41	4,750,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.012	0.012	0.012	0.012	2,700,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	1.64	1.72	1.6	1.7	21,866,000
Pal Holdings Inc.	3.75	3.75	3.75	3.75	1,000
Balabac Resources & Hldgs	4.3	4.5	4.25	4.25	375,000
Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc.	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	49,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	3.4	3.4	3.3	3.35	7,705,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	7.2	7.2	7.2	7.2	920,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	5	5	5	5	20,000
House of Investments Inc.	2.75	2.8	2.7	2.75	1,071,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	12.5	12.75	12.5	12.75	309,200
Magnum Holdings Inc.	9.3	9.8	9.3	9.5	1,849,000
Multitech Inv. Corp.	2.38	2.4	2.3	2.34	2,995,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	0.36	0.37	0.32	0.33	24,900,000
Solid Group Inc.	0.71	0.71	0.71	0.71	100,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.34	0.38	0.34	0.38	200,640,000
SM Investments Corp.	375	375	367.5	367.5	197,690
South China Resources Inc.	1.16	1.18	1.16	1.18	474,000
Unioil Res. & Holdings Co	0.3	0.35	0.29	0.31	50,550,000
Wellex Industries Inc.	0.2	0 21	0.2	0.21	1,530,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	15.75	15.75	15.25	15.25	12,763,300
Belle Corp.	1.44	1.46	1.42	1.42	9,884,000
A Brown Company Inc.	1.26	1.34	1.26	1.32	750,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.48	0.52	0.48	0.49	5,620,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	3.75	3.75	3.75	3.75	739,000
C & P Homes Inc.	2.5	2.5	2.48	2.48	990,000
Cebu Prop. Vent. A	1.68	1.68	1.68	1.68	2,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.47	0.49	0.43	0.45	61,290,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.75	0.76	0.75	0.76	5,100,000
Ever-Gotesco Resources	0.13	0.155	0.12	0.145	168,510,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.66	1.7	1.6	1.7	37,858,000
Gotesco Land Inc.	0.3	0.33	0.3	0.31	4,820,000
Gotesco Land Inc.B	0.3	0.33	0.3	0.32	550,000
Interport Res.	0.011	0.011	0.011	0.011	32,000,000
Interport Res. B	0.011	0.012	0.011	0.012	11,000,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.46	0.46	0.46	0.46	800,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.82	0.82	0.8	0.8	3,320,000
Marsteel Cons. Inc. A	0.025	0.028	0.025	0.028	8,400,000
Marsteel Cons. Inc. B	0.026	0.028	0.026	0.028	3,500,000
Megaworld Corp.	3.2	3.2	3.15	3.15	14,775,000
Metro Pacific Inv. Corp.	4.6	4.6	4.5	4.5	213,000
MRC Allied Ind. Inc.	0.89	0.9	0.86	0.87	7,390,000
Polar Property Holdings	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.6	132,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	19	20.5	19	20.5	2,909,400
Phil Realty And Holdings	0.6	0.6	0.58	0.59	10,000,000
SM Development Corp.	3.75	3.75	3.7	3.75	344,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	11.25	11.25	10.5	10.75	7,436,600
Suntrust Home Dev. Inc.	0.72	0.73	0.63	0.7	260,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.26	0.26	0.24	0.25	27,130,000
Zipporah Rlty Hldgs Inc.	1.06	1.32	1.06	1.18	200,000
MEDIA					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	24.5	25	24.5	25	346,000
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp.	1.02	1.04	1.02	1.04	86,000
TELECOMMUNICATIONS					
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	1.7	1.7	1.68	1.7	5,109,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	1290	1290	1270	1270	25,440
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	6.9	6.9	6.8	6.9	1,229,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	2495	2500	2490	2500	127,470
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY					
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.26	0.26	0.25	0.26	13,420,000
Diversified Fin. Network	3.8	3.8	3.8	3.8	55,000
Imperial Res.	0.025	0.031	0.024	0.03	421,000,000
Ionics Inc.	2.26	2.26	2.26	2.26	60,000
IPVG Corp.	6.9	6.9	6.5	6.7	3,249,000
Island Info and Tech Inc.	0.06	0.06	0.06	0.06	3,500,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.065	0.065	0.065	0.065	38,500,000
Transpacific Broadband	2.08	2.1	2.06	2.08	246,000
Philweb Corp.	0.046	0.047	0.046	0.047	194,200,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	4.3	4.3	4.3	4.3	10,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	27.5	28	27	27	7,060,400
Keppel Phils. Marine Inc.	1.16	1.16	1.16	1.16	388,000
HOTEL & LEISURE					
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	3.65	3.7	3.55	3.6	2,839,000
Manila Jockey Club	3.6	3.6	3.5	3.6	400,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	1.02	1.02	0.96	0.96	2,750,000
EDUCATION					
Far Eastern University	850	850	850	850	30
iPeople Inc.	3.4	3.4	3.3	3.3	120,000
DIVERSIFIED SERVICES					
Macroasia Corp.	2.9	3.15	2.9	2.95	5,616,000
Paxys Inc.	27.5	27.5	27.5	27.5	101,300
MINING					
Apex Mining Co. Inc. A	5.2	5.2	5	5	247,000
Apex Mining Co. Inc. B	5.2	5.2	5	5	122,000
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.013	0.013	0.012	0.013	142,400,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	11.75	12.75	11.75	12.75	15,397,900
Benguet Corp. A	11.75	11.75	11.5	11.5	23,000
Geograce Res. Phil. Inc.	1.78	1.86	1.76	1.86	72,224,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.33	0.33	0.31	0.31	11,540,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co. B	0.4	0.4	0.35	0.35	3,450,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.031	0.033	0.03	0.031	984,100,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.036	0.037	0.035	0.035	365,400,000
Omico Corp.	0.02	0.02	0.018	0.019	1,719,800,000
Philex Mining Corp.	4.45	4.45	4.4	4.45	9,017,000
Semirara Mining Corp.	21.75	22	21.75	22	236,100
United Paragon Mining Co.	0.74	0.78	0.74	0.78	4,340,000
Vulcan Ind'l	1.26	1.34	1.24	1.32	21,620,000
OIL					
Basic Petroleum Corp.	0.58	0.58	0.53	0.53	19,730,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.014	0.014	0.014	0.014	142,100,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.015	0.015	0.015	0.015	2,400,000
The Philodrill Corp.	0.013	0.014	0.013	0.014	315,800,000
Petroenergy Res. Corp.	9.4	9.4	9.1	9.1	142,000
PREFERRED					
Ayala Corp. Pref. B	120	120	120	120	8,910
WARRANTS, PHIL. DEPOSIT RECEIPTS, ETC.					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (PDR)	25.5	26	25.5	26	645,500
Metro Pac. Inv.- Warrants	3.4	3.4	3.4	3.4	138,000

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Housing projects get incentives

Nonpioneering ventures

By Ronnel W. Domingo

MORE AFFORDABLE HOUSING units would be made available to the public this year as the Board of Investments approved the granting of tax perks to two housing projects worth about P516 million.

Phinma Property Holdings Corp. is developing a P411.6-million venture called San Benissa Garden Villas along Commonwealth Avenue in Quezon City.

The other project is Stateland Inc.'s P104.3-million expansion—consisting of Phases 3 and 4—of its Gran Seville development in Cabuyao, Laguna.

The projects were registered with the BOI as nonpioneering ventures. They are qualified to an income tax holiday of up to four years, duty-free importation of capital goods and nonfiscal perks.

Phinma's project, which would make available 783 condominium units, sits on a 1.6-hectare land in Quezon City where 10 buildings are being constructed.

Selling prices range from P654,000 to P925,000 per unit, with a typical unit having an area of 30 sq.m.

Each building is a walk-up, five-story structure "laid out in a cluster design with six units per floor around a central hallway."

Each unit would have pre-painted walls and ceilings, vinyl floor tiles, modular kitchen counter, tiled toilet and bathroom, aluminum windows and fire-rated doors.

Stateland's expansion project sits on a 7.4-hectare land that would house 298 housing units priced between P1.4 million and P2.9 million each.

Each lot would have an area of between 100 sq.m. and 130 sq.m. while the units would be single attached and singled detached, with floor areas of 39, 46.5, 75 and 82.5 sq.m.

A single-story unit would have two bedrooms and a toilet and bath with tiles, while a two-story unit would have three bedrooms and two toilets and baths with tiles.

The BOI said the projects would help contribute to the socio-economic development of the areas through affordable housing, spark investments in related industries, generate local taxes on the purchase of construction materials and create jobs for residents.

Phinma's project is seen to create 430 jobs while that of Stateland is expected to need 305 workers.

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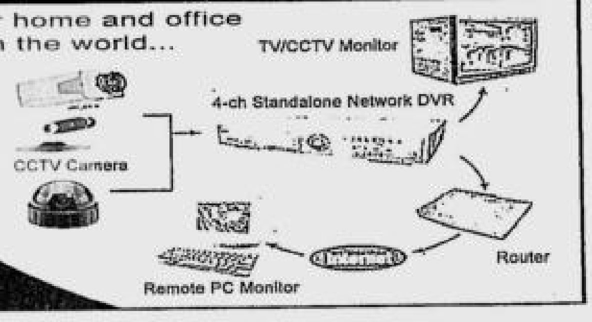

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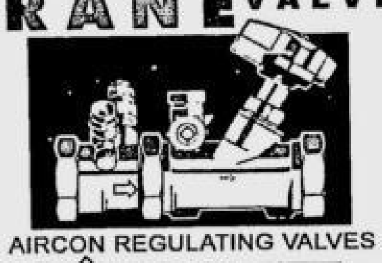

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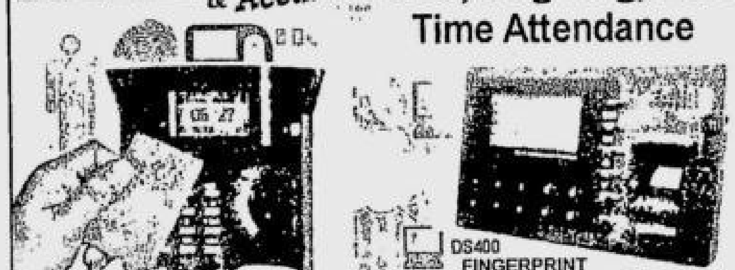

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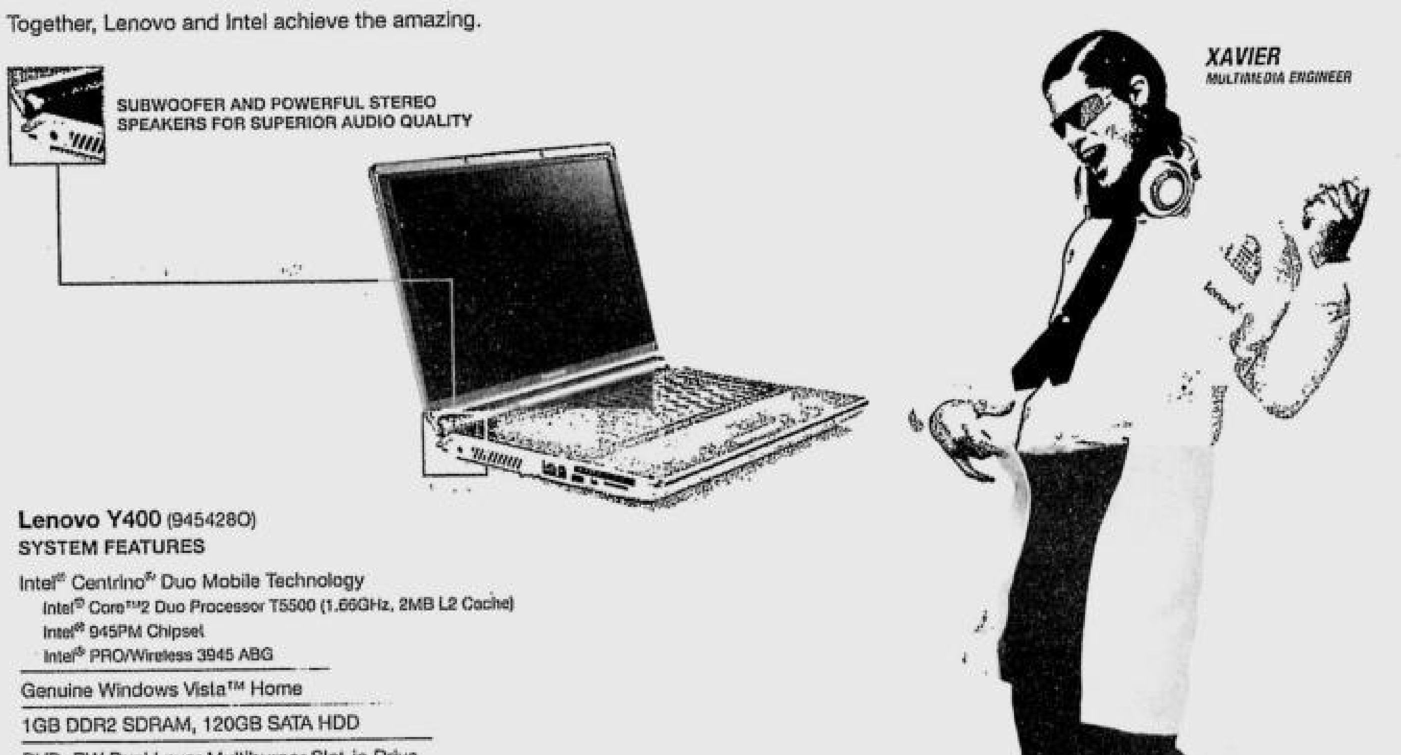
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Tower of Peza

BREAKTIME

Conrado R. Banal III

THE POLITICAL MATCH UP "TEAM UNITY versus Genuine Opposition" hugs the headlines for now, but another conflict—albeit unpublicized—is now worrying big business.

It's none other than the little-known "ERC versus Peza" dispute on electricity rates in the so-called special economic zones.

Peza is the Philippine Economic Zone Authority, which manages large industrial estates. The estates have their own rules, as if they are not part of the Philippines.

ERC is the Energy Regulatory Commission which, under the Epira (the power reform law), sets the electricity rates for everybody, including the government.

But PEZA continues to set the power rates in the special economic zones—a function it claims to have kept, despite the seven-year-old Epira, apparently due to a clerical error.

A provision in Epira seeks to remove the power of Peza to fix power rates in the zones by repealing a certain "Section 11 (c)" of RA 7916, which created the Peza.

Now, the Peza law does not contain "Section 11 (c)." Peza's authority to set power rates in the zones is contained in "Section 12 (c)."

Look at that: "12" instead of "11."

It must be a typo, right? Wrong, according to the Department of Justice.

DOJ boss Raul Gonzalez opines that, because "Section 11 (c)" does not exist in the Peza law, but which contains "Section 12 (c)," Peza may still set the power rates.

I am not kidding! In fact, Gonzalez says that Congress must pass a new law to amend the freaking typo. *Este*, I mean, the Epira!

With such an opinion, Gonzalez castrated ERC and circumcised the Epira.

Still, I really cannot say what can happen to our towns and cities without special economic zones, if industries move to the zones as a result of such an imbalance.

I only know that special zones are just the fiefdoms of powerful politicos, and they are enjoying such lucrative businesses as…well, smuggling.

For that matter, one group already cornered the power generation business in the zones. It must be a tower of influence in this country.

* * *

It seems that some officials at the Department of Foreign Affairs never liked the contractor for its "machine readable passport" (or MRP) project.

The DFA awarded the project to a certain BCA International some seven years ago, which would shoulder 100 percent of the cost under a BOT scheme.

Today, thanks to the diligence of the DFA officials who are trying to change the contractor with somebody else that they apparently like, we still have no MRP.

Only the public—particularly the more 9 million OFWs—therefore must suffer the indignities of carrying Philippine passports abroad.

In airports in the United States, for instance, they do "random" checks of passengers. They happen to choose mostly Filipinos for their "random" checks.

Maybe Filipinos are just born lucky. Or perhaps it's because, in this day and age, our passports are still not yet MRP. Meaning, it is easy to tamper with, okay!

Well, our country has yet to fulfill a commitment to the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) on the issuance of MRP.

That's why, seven years ago, the DFA (under the late former Foreign Affairs Secretary Blas Ople) contracted BCA International for the upgrading project.

Last December, the DFA terminated BCA International contract.

A few months after, the DFA had a MOA (memorandum of agreement) with the Bangko Sentral on another passport upgrading project, costing only P2 billion.

And so the original contractor, the BCA International, asked for payment for the work it has done, claiming P1 billion in compensation.

Of course the DFA must contest the claim. That's why the two sides are now locked in hair-pulling and hair-splitting court cases.

Never mind that, whenever the DFA questioned the "financial capability" of a contractor, it presented millions of dollars of credit lines and raised its paid-up capital.

Now, in all that "operation" against the contractor, word has it that somebody at the office of consular affairs figured prominently.

It was none other than "acting" Assistant Secretary Domingo Lucenario.

Again, that's just "acting!" Domingo who? Well, according to my info, he heads the office in charge of passport issuance. He is said to have the ears of DFA Secretary Alberto Romulo.

Even on wrong information?

Well, Romulo did not sign one particular petition before the Supreme Court. In it, Lucenario claimed that, unless the P2-billion BSP project (not the BCA International's, mind you) pushes through soon, there would be a shortage of passport paper.

Oh yeah? But why can't we order a shipment right away?

Somewhere lurking in the background may be a "preferred" supplier. From what I gathered, somebody with the initials "FC" has already traveled to Europe with a DFA top official.

* * *

Over at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport, it seems that the airport authorities are trying to find ways to go around the "condo" problem.

You see, some bright guys thought it best for us to have a high-rise project on the path of airplanes taking off and landing on Naia.

Thanks to the condo construction, one of only two runways at the Naia is hardly used. Authorities want to be careful. One wrong move of an airplane, and you may end up decorating the condo.

Wonder of wonders is that the Parañaque city hall issued the building permits and all that.

And so, according to Alfonso Cusi, general manager of the Manila International Airport Authority, operator of the Naia, they are looking for technical solutions.

Fine, boss, but why can't you just bomb the building?

US, RP firms ink coal-to-fuel project deals

Local company secures technical licenses for $2.8-B fuel project

By Abigail L. Ho

AMERICAN FIRM HEADWATERS Inc. and local company H&WB Corp. have signed several agreements worth almost $33 million, granting the latter the necessary licenses to jumpstart its proposed $2.8-billion coal-to-fuel project.

H&WB president Antonio Ver said the agreements signed between the two firms last Friday included the co-development funding contract, pre-front end engineering and design (pre-FEED) study agreement, technology license agreements, basic engineering design services agreements, technical services agreements and catalyst supply agreements.

A total of 10 agreements were signed, Ver said, with the technology license, basic engineering design services, technical services and catalyst supply agreements all divided into two separate agreements each: one for the direct coal liquefaction technology and indirect coal liquefaction technology, the licenses for which are held by Headwaters.

The signing of the 10 agreements would pave the way for the start of the second phase of the three-phase coal-to-fuels project that H&WB is working on, he said.

The Phase 2 program contract covers the entire second phase of the three-phase project. This involves process engineering design of the pre-FEED, technology licensing and the construction of the Fischer-Tropsch Process Demonstration Unit (FT-PDU) or a facility that turns coal into liquid fuels.

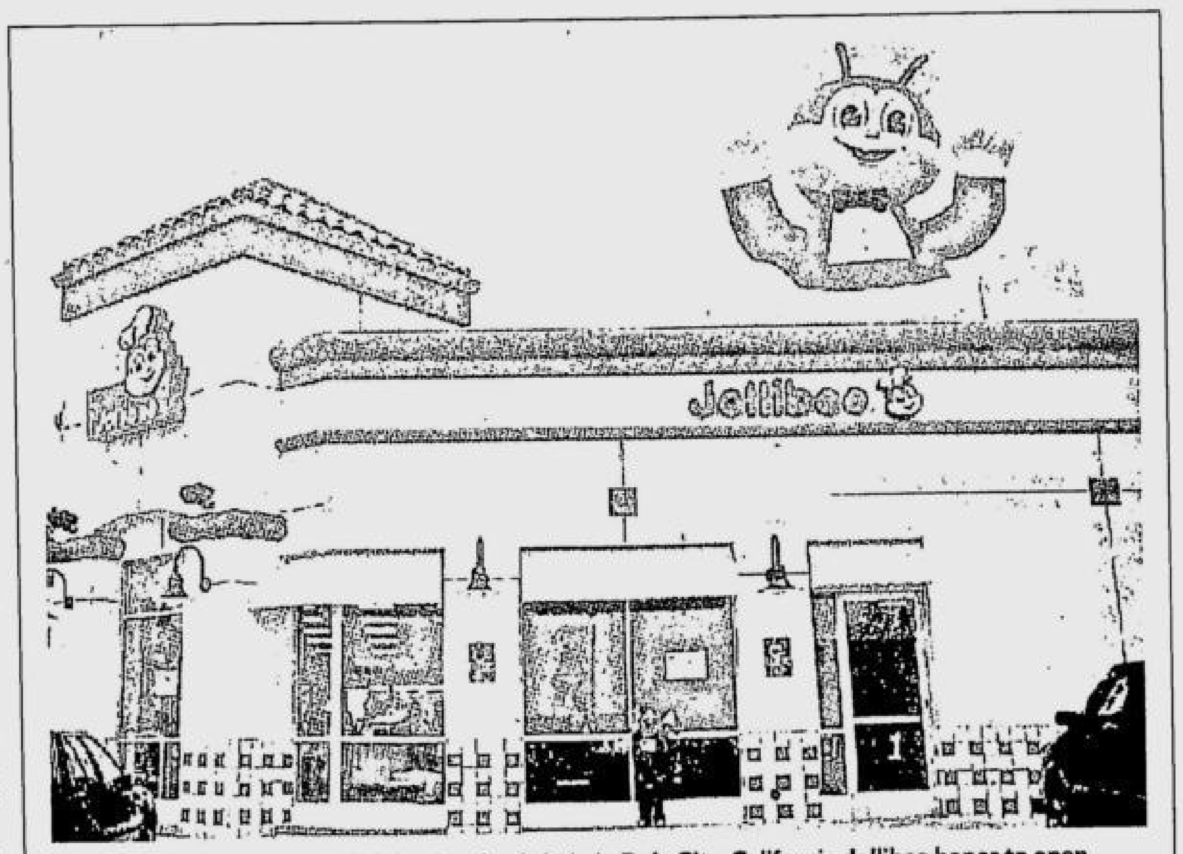
The Fischer-Tropsch co-development agreement will ensure that all existing and future improvements as well as new intellectual property rights will belong to Headwaters.

However, Headwaters and H&WB "are willing to share license revenue from the first 100,000 barrels per day commercial capacity at 25 percent of the cash value of the license revenue collected as return of investment to the FT-PDU program contributor/investor, excluding US government funding agency grants."

Under their technology as equity investment agreement, Ver had earlier said that Headwaters would reinvest part of the license fee into the project. This involved a total investment of $32.85 million.

The proposed coal liquefaction facility is expected to yield 61,200 barrels a day of ultra-clean fuels.

Apart from gasoline, diesel and LPG, the facility can also generate 67.2 megawatts (MW) of power, which can be channeled to the grid.



A BRANCH of the popular Filipino fast food chain in Daly City, California. Jollibee hopes to open more stores along the west coast of the US mainland this year.

Jollibee in aggressive expansion stance, to open 5 stores in US

By Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

FAST FOOD GIANT JOLLIBEE Foods Corp. is unfazed by fears of a slowing United States economy as it pumps in $2 million for five stores that will open in Las Vegas and California this year.

Tommy King, Jollibee's country head for the US, told the INQUIRER that the store in Las Vegas will open on April 22, while the one in Vallejo, Northern California will start operations at a later date.

The other stores are located in northern and southern California.

King said that with the addition of five stores, Jollibee will have a total of 16 stores in the US.

Also, a Red Ribbon branch will open on April 8 in Las Vegas, said King, who is concurrent country head for Red Ribbon Bakeshop operations in the US.

Five new stores are also in the pipeline for Red Ribbon in the US this year. Once the new branches open, Red Ribbon will have a total of 24 stores in the US.

The bakeshop chain is eyeing possible sites in Southern California, New York and New Jersey.

"We still believe that the US is a lucrative market (because of the growing Filipino community)," King said. "This is the biggest number of stores (to open) in one year, which will put us in the driver's seat, compared with two to three openings before."

In the third quarter, Red Ribbon recorded $5.4 million in system-wide sales from its US stores.

Jollibee officials last year said Red Ribbon will open new stores in the US with a budget of roughly $300,000 per store.

SuperFerry, Smart link up for mobile payment

CELLULAR SERVICES PROVIDER Smart Communications Inc. has forged a partnership with SuperFerry to jointly develop a passenger travel fare collection system using the Smart Money electronic financial services platform.

This will enable passengers to pay for their tickets with just a few clicks on their mobile phones. The service will bring Smart closer to creating the Smart Mobility Loop, the country's first mobile-based, universal transport payment system designed for the mobile operator's estimated 25 million subscribers.

"Our tie-up with SuperFerry is our third major partnership under our Smart Mobility Loop program," Smart president and CEO Napoleon L. Nazareno said in a statement. "Our vision is to make the Smart Money electronic cash card—which can be accessed and used via the cell phone—the all-in-one payment card for the increasingly mobile Filipino. This will be the first mobile-based inter-modal transport payment system for sea, land, rail and air transport services."

The service will be available during the Holy Week. *Riza T. Olchondra*

Sy named best female banker in Asia Pacific

SY

TERESITA "TESSIE" SY, VICE chair of Equitable PCI Bank, was named winner of "The Asian Banker Award for Women in the Financial Services Industry 2006" during The Asian Banker leadership awards ceremonies on March 26 in Jakarta, Indonesia, said The Asian Banker, the event organizer.

"As one of the most innovative and influential women in banking in the Asia-Pacific region, she continues to be an inspiration, and could not be a more deserving recipient of special recognition," according to the citation of the Singapore-based company for Sy.

In another category, Sy and BDO president Nestor Tan were joint winners of "The Asian Banker Leadership Awards 2006" for the Philippines, making them two of the winning 14 top commercial bankers in the same number of countries in the region.

Under this category, the citation said Sy and Tan's plan to transform the emerging institution into a large bank at the center of a more streamlined financial environment seems a remarkably prescient one.

"The merger of the two institutions will further raise the bar of competition for the Philippine banking sector, setting the pace for the entire industry to become more synchronized with the greater Asian financial services community by allowing only the highest standards of excellence in their institutions," according to the citation.

There were 14 awards for leadership at a country level, effectively citing the winners as the top commercial bankers in a region that is composed of Australia, China, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Japan, South Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, Singapore, Taiwan, Thailand, Vietnam and the Philippines.

Another Filipino banker, Rizal Commerical Banking Corp. corporate vice chair Cesar E. Virata, was one of the two awardees of "The Asian Banker Lifetime Achievement Awards 2006."

DOTC hit …

From page B1

Chinese government to finance a ZTE-proposed project and issue a Philippine sovereign guarantee.

"To our knowledge, AHI submitted the first complete proposal to DOTC for the National Broadband Network on 5 December 2006," AHI president Nathaniel Sauz said in his letter. "To date, more than 60 days from date of submission of AHI's proposal, DOTC has not conducted the initial evaluation required under the rules."

According to the project proponent, the rules on unsolicited proposals require the agency or local government unit to perform the initial evaluation of a project based on the merits of the proposal, the qualification of proponent, and the suitability of contractual arrangement and propriety of risk allocation within 60 days of submission of a complete proposal.

Quoting the implementing rules and regulations of the Built-Operate-Transfer Law (RA 7718), Sauz pointed out that "the [DOTC] shall advice the proponent whether it accepts the proposal, which acceptance confers upon the proponent the title 'original proponent,' or if it rejects the proposal."

"Once a proponent has been recognized as the original proponent, the agency shall not evaluate other similar proposals until bids are solicited, or if negotiations between the agency and the original proponent have failed," he added in his letter.

The AHI proposal also states that the company will operate the network and will charge a percentage below the lowest price of local telecommunication firms, specifically a range of 50 centavos to 75 centavos per call.

BSP rolls out loan facility for countryside dev't

By Doris C. Dumlao

CEBU CITY—THE BANGKO SENTRAL ng Pilipinas yesterday rolled out in this industrial and financial hub a real-time loan refinancing facility to help banks scale up their lending capabilities and pump-prime the countryside.

During the launching of the electronic rediscounting system (ERS) or eRediscounting at the Cebu International Convention Center, the BSP also signed a memorandum of agreement with 10 local banks that had expressed interest in using the new platform.

Rediscounting is a credit facility of the BSP to help banks liquefy their position by refinancing the loan they extend to their clients. Under this facility, banks can rediscount their peso, dollar and yen loans granted to finance export, import, trading, food production, transport, warehousing, low-cost housing and agricultural loans with long gestation period.

With eRediscounting, an Internet-based platform for rediscounting, qualified banks in Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao may conduct transactions, such as loan applications and payments with the BSP on a real-time basis.

The paperless rediscounting scheme is seen as a big improvement from the previous manual system which takes three days to process before the loan proceeds are released to borrower-banks.

"This is another headway in serving the needs of the banking community," BSP Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. said. "This improvement in refinancing technology will translate to better access to exporters and small and medium enterprises, especially those outside Metro Manila."

Tetangco said the new platform would simplify, standardize and boost the BSP's rediscounting, one of the BSP's key monetary tools.

Cebu Bankers Club president Hermelo Parot said the introduction of eRediscounting would give banks far greater convenience that was unimaginable 20 years ago.

"The rediscounting with the BSP means more credit flowing to our businesses, particularly to our exporters, and at lower rates," said Parot, who is also vice president for Philippine National Bank's retail banking in Visayas.

The 10 local banks which inked a participation agreement with the BSP yesterday were: First Consolidated Bank (Bohol), Planters Development Bank (Cebu branch), Queen City Development Bank (Iloilo), Rural Bank (RB) Dulag (Leyte), RB Tanjay (Negros Oriental), First Agro-Industrial RB (Cebu), RB Jamindon (Capiz), RB Katipunan (Zamboanga del Norte), RB Oraquieta (Misamis Occidental) Inc. and First Valley Bank Inc. (Lanao del Sur).

Local branches of big commercial banks also affirmed their participation: United Coconut Planters Bank, Equitable PCIBank, Union Bank of the Philippines and Bank of the Philippine Islands.

The real-time delivery of credit to banks is seen to accelerate the turnover of money available for relending.

The BSP has set aside a revolving fund of P20 billion for the peso rediscounting facility and $500 million for the US dollar and yen-denominated rediscounting facility.

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The world on strings

NEVER HAD AN ORCHESTRA OF STRINGS been so diverse and awesome as it was during the closing night of the 2nd International Rondalla Festival which was recently held at Dumaguete City. In keeping with the festival's theme: Strings of Unity, plucked string musicians from Israel, Russia, Japan, Thailand, Mexico, Myanmar, Iran, Australia and several Philippine rondalla ensembles joined together to interpret in mandolin, domra, Burmese harp, phin, So, koto, guitar, banduria and other Philippine rondalla and foreign plucked string instruments Mamerto Villegas' *Garbo sa Kabisay-an*, Chino Toledo's Cuerdas Theme : *Isahan sa Pagkakaisa* and Dr. Ramon P. Santos' arrangement of the *Cuerdas II medley*.As Dean Ramon Acoymo of the UP College of Music has said in his speech during the opening night, "I've got the world on a string", the festival for a brief moment held over 300 artists representing Europe, Asia, Australia, Latin America and the Arab region in its cradle as they met, performed and interacted on the subject of plucked string music.

From February 19 to 25, 2007, the festival which was called *Cuerdas sa Panaghiusa* or Strings of Unity reverberated the dazzling and beguiling sounds of plucked strings in 7 main concerts at the newly built Oriental Negros Convention Center, 21 outreach performances in jam-packed venues in the outskirts of Dumaguete City, 4 special performances within prison walls, orphanages, nursing homes and hospitals, and a night of simultaneous performances along Dumaguete's baywalk.

A mixed crowd of foreign and local music enthusiasts flocked to the performance venues to experience the festival. They clapped, shouted praises, sung as foreign groups interpreted familiar tunes as Dandansoy and Bahay Kubo and amazed performers with their spontaneous display of appreciation, something not common for groups like Israel and Russia who were used to a very formal audience.

Cuerdas sa Panaghiusa was presented by the National Commission for Culture and the Arts through the Musicological Society of the Philippines, in partnership with the Province of Oriental Negros and in cooperation with the UP College of Music.

Zamboanga City Electric Cooperative, Inc.
(ZAMCELCO)
Putik, Zamboanga City

INVITATION TO BID

The Zamboanga City Electric Cooperative, Inc. (ZAMCELCO) at Putik, this city per requisite under Board Policies on Pre-Qualifications, and Bids and Awards, invites ALL Interested Bidders/Suppliers to bid for the supply of the following electrical materials/equipment/items, to wit:

ITEM	QTY	UNIT	DESCRIPTION OF MATERIALS
1	1	unit	**Repair and rewinding of Power Transformer rated 21 Mva, 67/13.2/7.62 Kv., 60Hz, 3Phase, Class OA/FA1/FA2 OLTC at Secondary and NLTC at the primary side., Allis Chalmer brand with champered main tank cover.** Note: 1. Estimated price includes the 12% VAT from the date of receipt of the Job Order 2. Conversion from dead tank to conservator type 3. Conversion from Champered to Bolted type top cover 4. The contractor shall be responsible to transfer the unit from San Jose Gusu substation to Load Center lot substation 5. Final assembly, testing and commissioning shall be at the Load Center lot substation site 6. See attached scope of work **NOTHING FOLLOWS** **AGENCY PRICE P 6,500,000.00**

SCOPE OF WORK FOR THE REPAIR OF 21 MVA POWER TRANSFORMER AT GUGU SUBSTATION

A.	MOBILIZATION	
	A.1	Contractor shall provide the following:
	A.1.1	Nitrogen gas for storage filling
	A.1.2	Oxy/acetylene outfit and tanks
	A.1.3	Tools and special test equipment
B.	LIFTING OF CORE/WINDING COIL ASSEMBLY	
	B.1	Lifting of core / winding coil assembly
	B.2	Removal of power transformer main tank
	B.3	Lowering of Core / winding coil assembly
C.	REFERENCE TEST DATA	
	C.1	Prepare the actual connection diagram of the power transformer
	C.2	Conduct preliminary reference test data
	C.2.1	Insulation resistance test
	C.2.2	Primary winding resistance test
	C.2.3	Secondary winding resistance test
	C.2.4	Contact resistance test of On load tap changer per tap position
	C.2.5	Transformer turn ratio test at normal tap position
D.	DISMANTLING OF POWER TRANSFORMER PARTS	
	D.1	Removal of main tank top cover and its attachment
	D.2	Removal of Tap changer assembly
	D.3	Removal of core attachment
	D.4	Removal of three (3) Phase winding coil
E.	RECONDITIONING OF POWER TRANSFORMER COMPONENT	
	E.1	Replacement of insulation of Phase A and B winding coil
	E.2	High and low tap changer assembly
	E.3	Pressure relief valve assembly
F.	REWINDING OF PHASE B WINDING COIL	
G.	OIL FILLING THROUGH FILTRATION MACHINE	
	G.1	Transfomer oil flushing and baking of main tank and Tap changer housing/radiator
	G.2	Transformer oil filling at desired oil level
	G.3	Conduct transformer oil trial test after oil filling
H.	RE-ASSEMBLING OF CORE/WINDING COIL AND ITS COMPONENT	
I.	RE-INSTALLATION OF RADIATOR AND CONSERVATOR TANK AND ITS ACCESSORIES	
J.		Preliminary Bushing test
	J.1	Primary and secondary bushing test
	J.1.1	Insulation resistance test
	J.1.2	Insulation power factor test
	J.1.3	Non distructive high pot test
K.	REPLACEMENT OF COVER GASKET AND REPAIR OF DAMAGE COOLING FINS	
L.	BAKING OF CORE/WINDING COIL ASSEMBLY	
N.	LEAK TEST	
	N.1	Main tank and top cover
	N.2	Radiator fittings
	N.3	Transformer oil pipe fittings
	N.4	Primary and secondary bushing
	N.5	Other parts of the power transfomer
O.	FINAL TEST	
	O.1	Insulation resistance test
	O.2	Primary winding resistance test per phase
	O.3	Secondary winding resistance test per phase
	O.4	Insulation power factor test
	O.5	Contact resistance test of high and low tap changer per tap position
	O.6	Transformer turn ratio test tap position
	O.7	Transformer oil analysis
	O.7.1	Water content (ppm)
	O.7.2	Dissolved Gas Analysis
	O.7.3	Oil Dielectric Strength Voltage breakdown voltage test
	O.7.4	Insulation Power Factor
	O.7.4a	Dissipation Factor
	O.7.4b	Dielectric Loss
	O.7.5	Interfacial Tension
	O.7.6	Neutralization Number
	O.7.7	Color
	O.8	Exciting current test
	O.9	Open circuit test
	O.10	Other related test
P.	SUBMISSION OF REPORT	
	P.1	Reference test data
	P.2	Preliminary bushing test
	P.3	Final test duly signed by test license engineer
	P.4	Certificate of completion
	P.5	Certificate of warranty
Q.	COMMISSIONING	
	Q.1	The contractor representative shall be present during the final energization and actual loading on the date specified by the coop.
R.	OTHERS	
	R.1	Zamcelco shall provide two (2) units Distribution transformer rated 50Kva, 7620/240Volts, with fuse cutouts for the power supply of test equipment
	R.2	Zamcelco will provide available steel plate in moving the main tank
	R.3	Zamcelco boom truck will be available with equipment charges
	R.4	The energy consumption used during the duration of project shall be charge to the contractor
	R.5	The contractor shall provide ninety four (94) drums brand new transformer oil
	R.6	The contractor shall supply and install two (2) units oil & winding temp. gauge with relay contact
	R.7	The contractor shall supply and install float diaphram type conservator tank for main and OTLC (either separate tank or one tank with separator) with complete accessories design for 21 Mva
	R.8	The contractor shall supply and install Buchholtz relays for Main and OLTC, pipes and fittings
	R.9	The contractor shall supply and convert the main tank top cover from welded to bolted type
	R.10	The contractor shall supply all lifting activities (Crane/Boom truck)

You may secure the Pre-qualification Requirements from the office of the Finance Department, ZAMCELCO Complex in Putik, this city anytime during office hours and submit the same upon completion of all requirements thereof.

Submission of the Pre-qualification Requirements shall not be later than 5:00 p.m of **APRIL 13, 2007** and no documents pertaining thereto, shall be accepted thereafter.

All applicants will be duly notified as to the results of the pre-qualification eligibility process. Only those who are pre-qualified will be allowed to participate in the bidding.

Bidding will be conducted on **APRIL 19, 2007.**

Sealed bid in duplicate copies should be submitted to the Committee on Bids and Awards at the Office of the Finance Department at the above-mentioned address on or before 2:00 p.m. of **APRIL 19, 2007.** Five percent (5%) Bidder's Bond is required as a matter of policy.

The right to reject any or all bids, to waive any formality therein, or to accept such bid as may be considered advantageous to the coop is hereby reserved as an absolute prerogative of ZAMCELCO.

(Sgd.) **REINERIO R. RAMOS**
General Manager

(PDI - March 27 & 28, 2007)

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF AGRARIAN REFORM
Provincial Agrarian Reform Office
San Francisco, Agusan del Sur

NOTICE OF COVERAGE

Pursuant to Section 7 of Republic Act No. 6657, the following landowners are hereby notified that their properties hereunder listed, to wit:

	LANDOWNER	LOCATION	TITLE NO.	LOT NO.	AREA (HAS)
1.	Union Bank of the Philippines	Dacutan, Esperanza	T-16464	1386,Pls-181	4.8386
2.	Union Bank of the Philippines	Guadalupe, Esperanza	T-16465	667,Pls-443	13.0584
3.	Feati Bank & Trust Company	Remedios, Esperanza	T-3930	979,Pls-182	7.9213
4.	Remedios M. Mascarinas	Poblacion, Esperanza	T-1571	136,F, (LRC) Psd-166844	20.8203
5.	Dina M. Mascarinas	Poblacion, Esperanza	T-1568	136-B, (LRC Psd-166844	10.0001
6.	Dina M. Mascarinas	Poblacion, Esperanza	T-1569	136-C, (LRC) Psd-166844	10.0001
7.	Dina M. Mascarinas	Poblacion, Esperanza	T-1573	136-D, (LRC) Psd-166844	5.0000
8.	Constancia Masinsin	Poblacion, Esperanza	T-1572	136-A, (LRC) Psd-166844	10.0001
9.	Union Bank of the Philippines	Labao, Salvacion, Esperanza	(T-290) 179	1452,Pls-225	5.9554
10.	Union Bank of the Philippines	Labao, Salvacion, Esperanza	(T-290) 179	1473,Pls-225	3.3084
11.	Luis R. Labayen	Kauswagan, Talacogon	T-4982	246,Pls-747	13.5137
12.	Jose Centino (NAIDCOR)	Los Arcos, Prosperidad	T-2289	1899,Pls-43	11.0485
13.	Angelita Mongato (NAIDCOR)	Los Arcos, Prosperidad	P-9096	2191,Pls-43	23.0138
14.	Teofista Rivera (NAIDCOR)	Los Arcos, Prosperidad	P-8237	1879,Pls-43	14.4727
15.	Sulpicio Saracen (NAIDCOR)	Los Arcos, Prosperidad	(P-3442) P-4620-B	2190,Pls-43	22.4032
16.	Edilberta Saladaga (NAIDCOR)	Los Arcos, Prosperidad	T-4981	4228,Pls-43	7.9085
17.	Archipelago Realty Corporation (NAIDCOR)	Los Arcos, Prosperidad	T-4535	4227,Pls-43	12.8299
18.	Rosita Lamamelao (NAIDCOR)	Los Arcos, Prosperidad	T-4892	1878,Pls-43	6.8641
19.	Jovencio Pontillo (NAIDCOR)	Los Arcos, Prosperidad	T-2772	3472,Pls-43	10.6982
20.	Nicodemus Pizarro (NAIDCOR)	Los Arcos, Prosperidad	(P-6702) P-4829	3277,Pls-43	13.7399
21.	Flores Moreno (NAIDCOR)	Los Arcos, Prosperidad	(P-7091) P-5136	2198,Pls-43	8.0363
22.	Isagani Janier (NAIDCOR)	Los Arcos, Prosperidad	(T-870) T-610	1875,Pls-43	11.2763
23.	Leon Gollangco (NAIDCOR)	Los Arcos, Prosperidad	(T-983) T-706	2156,Pls-43	8.4346
24.	Benjamin Anciado (NAIDCOR)	Los Arcos, Prosperidad	T-4515	1876,Pls-43	6.8215
25.	Narcisa Moreno (NAIDCOR)	Los Arcos, Prosperidad	P-6483	3474,Pls-43	7.2048
26.	Jesus Magsaysay (Madison Trading Corporation)	Los Arcos, Prosperidad	(T-1344) T-1015	1904,Pls-43	17.8852
27.	Trinidad Trimidal (Madison Trading Corporation)	Los Arcos, Prosperidad	P-6417	3417,Pls-43	14.3297
28.	Jesus Mangadlao (NAIDCOR)	Los Arcos, Prosperidad	P-6535	3278,Pls-43	8.0420
29.	Tranquilino Remojo (Madison Trading Corporation)	Los Arcos, Prosperidad	P-6510	3416,Pls-43	11.3448
30.	Andres Quirequire (NAIDCOR)	Los Arcos, Prosperidad	P-6488	1909,Pls-43	6.9201
31.	Martin Urbiztondo (NAIDCOR)	Los Arcos, Prosperidad	T-5821	1910,Pls-43	9.2022
32.	Edelaida Cembrano (NAIDCOR)	Los Arcos, Prosperidad	T-2036	1911,Pls-43	11.2687
33.	Narcisa Moreno (NAIDCOR)	Los Arcos, Prosperidad	(P-5847) P-4173	4516,Pls-43	9.6229
34.	Jose Dapar (NAIDCOR)	Los Arcos, Prosperidad	(P-6386) P-4572	3494,Pls-43	13.9891
35.	Arsenio Obsenares (NAIDCOR)	Los Arcos, Prosperidad	T-1809	2628,Pls-43	9.2542
36.	Norma Santoya (NAIDCOR)	Los Arcos, Prosperidad	(P-6620) P-4762	3484, Pls-43	7.7578
37.	Juanito Buladaco (NAIDCOR)	Libertad, Prosperidad	T-5491	3478,Pls-43	11.0814
38.	Eustacio Alvar (NAIDCOR)	Libertad, Prosperidad	T-1764-B	3488,Pls-43	8.8187
39.	Pastor Ago (NAIDCOR)	Azpitia, Prosperidad	T-5711	2888,Pls-43	3.0219
40.	Peter Latorre (NAIDCOR)	Azpitia, Prosperidad	T-1869	2425,Pls-43	5.2773
41.	Samuel Villacampa (NAIDCOR)	Azpitia, Prosperidad	T-1975	2916,Pls-43	11.5790
42.	Policronio Merigildo (NAIDCOR)	Azpitia, Prosperidad	P-6404	2917,Pls-43	3.6769
43.	Ricardo Orquita (NAIDCOR)	Azpitia, Prosperidad	P-1539 N-1454	2924,Pls-43	10.0496
44.	Solona Canoy (NAIDCOR)	Azpitia, Prosperidad	T-3696	2381,Pls-43	6.1774
45.	Esmeralda Gonzaga (NAIDCOR)	Azpitia, Prosperidad	T-3319	2921,Pls-43	6.9407
46.	Vicente Daquipil (NAIDCOR)	Mabuhay, Prosperidad	T-3393	2344,Pls-43	15.2850
47.	Marcelino Husain (NAIDCOR)	Prosperidad	(T-910) T-647	2748,Pls-43	6.8108
48.	Jose Alutaya (NAIDCOR)	San Martin, Prosperidad	(P-7372) P-5325	2732,Pls-43	5.3961
49.	Lazaro Gascon (NAIDCOR)	San Martin, Prosperidad	T-2637	2635,Pls-43	5.5562
50.	Lazaro Gascon (NAIDCOR)	Salimbogaon, Prosperidad	T-2116	2739,Pls-43	15.5252
51.	Leonardo Okilan (NAIDCOR)	Salimbogaon, Prosperidad	T-4259	2778,Pls-43	8.6550
52.	Ricardo Varila (NAIDCOR)	Salimbogaon, Prosperidad	T-4212	2821,Pls-43	12.9592
53.	Lucresia Lagulao (NAIDCOR)	Salimbogaon, Prosperidad	T-2813	2759,Pls-43	11.6117
54.	Pedro Martin (NAIDCOR)	Salimbogaon, Prosperidad	(P-5851) P-4177	2305,Pls-43	13.1417
55.	Anacleta Sauro (NAIDCOR)	Salimbogaon, Prosperidad	(P-6691) P-4738	2307,Pls-43	14.6438
56.	Hugo Albior (NAIDCOR)	Salimbogaon, Prosperidad	P-6705	2876,Pls-43	13.9207
57.	Lazaro Gascon (NAIDCOR)	San Salvador, Prosperidad	(T-1539) N-1053	2631,Pls-43	5.7832
58.	DBP (NAIDCOR)	Los Arcos, Prosperidad	T-4815	2235,Pls-43	19.3338
59.	DBP (NAIDCOR)	Los Arcos, Prosperidad	T-4814	1898,Pls-43	7.7298
60.	DBP (NAIDCOR)	San Martin, Prosperidad	T-1581	2930,Pls-43	4.0884
61.	DBP (NAIDCOR)	Salimbogaon, Prosperidad	T-4015	2770,Pls-43	7.3878
	TOTAL				623.2347

are now covered under the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program under DAR Administrative Order No. 4, Series of 2005, the right to choose the area to be retained must be exercised within thirty (30) days from the date of Publication of the Notice of Coverage. Failure to exercise the right of retention within the prescribe period shall be considered as a waiver of the right/privilege to apply for exemption/exclusion or retention, nominate children as beneficiaries or submit evidence determining just compensation.

Under Executive Order No. 405, we shall request the Land Bank of the Philippines to determine the reasonable Land Value of the said properties being acquired pursuant to Section 17, of Republic Act 6657.

(Sgd.) **MARINO M. GAYRAMON**
Provincial Agrarian Reform Officer II

(PDI – March 27, 2007)

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Department of Labor and Employment A19
Power Speaking Skill through Mind Mapping A19

OBITUARIES

PEDRO S. FLORES

Retiree of Engineering Services,
United Laboratories, Inc.

Peacefully joined his Creator on March 24, 2007 at the age of 63.

His body will be transferred in Sta. Barbara, Iloilo today, March 27. Interment will be announced later.

DEATH NOTICE

MARIA LUISA "MALU, MARILU" ENRIQUEZ DEL ROSARIO
Peacefully joined our Lord on January 23, 2007.

Her cremated remains will be brought to Immaculate Concepcion Cathedral, Cubao, Quezon City on March 31, 2007, Saturday, wherein the Holy Mass will be celebrated at 10:00 a.m. in the Crypt's chapel. Interment will follow afterwards.

BELEN BOTOR CUEVAS
Peacefully joined our Lord on March 22, 2007 at the age of 84.

Her remains lie in state at the Genesis Funeral Homes, Santolan, San Juan. Interment will be today, March 27, 2007, 2:00 p.m. at the San Juan Cemetery.

FELICIDAD (ELING) SISON USON

Who passed away in the Grace of our Lord on March 23, 2007 in Quezon City, Philippines at the age of 85.

Her son **Chibu**, and his wife **Mae**; grandchildren: **Anna Margarita** and **Miguel Luigi**, together with their relatives and friends request pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at St. Peter Memorial Chapels, Quezon Avenue, Quezon City.

Interment today, March 27, 2007 at Eternal Garden, Balintawak, Quezon City after the 1:00 p.m. Mass at St. Peter Memorial Chapels.

Col. MARCIAL N. MORAL, Sr. (Ret.)

Born: Sept. 28, 1918 – Died: March 24, 2007

ANGELITA R. MORAL (Daughter)

Born: June 27, 1951 – Died: March 25, 2007

The bereaved family: **Mrs. Ernesta Moral**, children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of their souls.

Their remains lie in state at the Loyola Memorial Chapels, Marikina City.

Interment will be on Thursday, March 29, 2007, 3:00PM at the Loyola Memorial Park, Marikina City.

Carmen (Ching) L. Salvosa Javier-Evans

(Of Bay, Laguna; Polillo, Quezon; & Javier, Leyte)
Dec. 23, 1948 - Feb. 26, 2007
Passed away in the Grace of our Lord at the age of 58.

Her bereaved parents **Simeon & Lourdes Salvosa Javier**, husband **Bill Evans**, son **David**, daughter **Krista**, brothers and sisters **Dolores & Roberto de Guzman, Simeon Jr. & Marisse Torres, Philip & Dee Etorma, Hi-loh & Aniceto Cabrera, Daniel S. Javier, M.D.**, and **Pinky & Danilo Alcazar**, nephews, nieces, grandchildren, relatives, friends, and in-laws request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains were laid in state at the McCormick Mortuary, Redondo Beach, CA. Funeral services were held at the American Martyr's Church, Manhattan Beach, CA. and interment at the Holy Cross Cemetery, Culver City, CA. on March 5, 2007.

The 40th day of her passing away falls on Good Friday (April 6, 2007). For prayers, the gathering of relatives, friends and associates will be held at the chapel of the Salvosa family residence in Bay, Laguna.

Our heartfelt gratitude to all those who condoled with us.

For your Classified Ads requirements:

HEAD OFFICE : 897-8808 loc. 514, 516; 899-4425; 897-2535; 897-8425 (Telefax)
CUBAO: 912-9008 to 11 (Aurora) **MAKATI** : 892-5578; 811-4361; 811-4370
KALAW : 528-0213; 527-3342 **MEGAMALL** : 635-0219; 635-0220

Bangko Sentral seen further easing foreign exchange policies

Simplifying documentary requirements, procedures

By Doris C. Dumlao

CEBU CITY—THE BANGKO SENTRAL ng Pilipinas yesterday said there was still room to further ease foreign exchange policies to make the country's regulatory framework more responsive to the needs of a more dynamic economy.

BSP Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. said there were two areas that the monetary authorities could work on: The simplification of documentary requirements for transactions in need of BSP approval and the streamlining of procedures.

During a lecture series here, BSP managing director for research Cyd Amador said: "We continue to keep the ground fertile with reforms."

"The BSP has its eyes open. It is aware that liberalization opens the economy to some risks in terms of increasing vulnerability as well as risk of vicissitudes of the global financial market," Amador said.

She said forex liberalization would result in the following:

-easing of financing constraints which would allow countries with limited savings to attract financing for productive purposes;

-enabling investors to diversify portfolios, thus minimizing risks, and to earn higher rates of return and lower cost of capital;

-additional liquidity and depth in the foreign exchange and financial markets;

-macroeconomic policy discipline, and

-reduction of the regulatory burden and administrative costs.

Effective April 2, the BSP will allow banks to hold foreign exchange for their own account equivalent to as much as 20 percent of unimpaired capital or $50 million, whichever is lower, up from the previous restriction of 2.5 percent or $5 million. It will also relax some restrictions on noncommercial purchase of dollars as well as the amount of outward investments by residents.

Amador said the BSP started the forex liberalization process in 2005 or even before the recent influx of foreign portfolio funds to the Philippines and other Asian emerging markets.

"The objective is really to upgrade the foreign exchange framework. We believe that the conditions are particularly favorable at the moment. There's much improvement with the macroeconomic fundamentals," she said.

She added that recent developments in the region—particularly the commitment among Asean (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) to allow free flow of capital by 2015—likewise compelled Philippine monetary authorities to finetune its forex framework now.

"The message we'd like to send is that there's a window of opportunity within which to undertake the reforms. The best time to plug the leaks in the ship is not during a time of stormy weather but when the weather is calm and orderly," she said.

While the Philippines now has an open current account system, she said there were still some restrictions on the capital account in both the inflows and outflows side.

TRADERS transact their business at the stock exchange in Makati. Share prices yesterday closed 0.63 percent lower as cautious investors locked in profits while waiting for a fresh positive lead, dealers said. The composite index finished 20.01 points lower at 3,150.04 after trading between 3,146.25 and 3,181.40. The broader all-share index fell 8.64 points or 0.42 percent to 2,029.45. AFP

Aussie miner starts Acoje drilling

AUSTRALIAN FIRM RUSINA MINING NL remains bullish in Philippine mining prospects as it starts drilling for nickel and explores for platinum deposits in its Acoje project in Zambales.

"We are very excited about the Acoje project. The property is quite large with an area of 11 kilometers by 5 kilometers. Its reported resources have focused only on a 1.2-kilometer area. There is definitely a huge potential for undiscovered minerals in this area," Rusina Managing director Robert Gregory said in a statement.

Gregory said Acoje was one of the few projects worldwide that had produced platinum group metals (PGM)-rich nickel sulphide outside the producing areas of South Africa's Bushveld, Zimbabwe, Stillwater complex at Montana of the United States, and Siberia.

The Perth-based company has also started consolidating its projects in Zambales with the recent signing of a Letter of Intent with local firm Geograce Resources Philippines Inc. for the joint exploration and development of the southern portion of the Acoje project. Rusina also signed a technical services agreement with Geograce for various mining projects in the country.

Chromite and nickel are key components in the production of stainless steel, which is forecast to grow 6 percent this year and is driven by China's rapid economic expansion. "Rusina is well positioned to benefit from the revitalization of the Philippine mining industry as well as the continuing strong commodity price cycle," Gregory added.

Acoje was one of southeast Asia's largest metallurgical chromite mines until it was forced to close down in 1993 due to low commodity prices and limited access to capital for expansion. Rusina picked up the mothballed project in 1995.

Dutch firm to infuse $20M into project of Manila Mining

By Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

NETHERLANDS-BASED ANGLO INVESTments B.V., a unit of mining giant Anglo American Plc, is investing $20 million in Manila Mining Corp.'s copper-gold project in Surigao del Norte for a 40-percent stake in the mining project.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange (PSE), Manila Mining said it had signed a farm-in agreement yesterday with Anglo Investments BV, a wholly-owned subsidiary of London-based Anglo American Plc.

The project would involve 250 hectares of the 2,463 hectares covered by Manila Mining's renewed exploration permit, known as the Kalayaan Project.

Under the farm-in agreement, Anglo will fund the project's "pre-feasibility phase"—a study that will determine whether the project is worth pursuing—at an estimated cost of $20 million within two to three years.

The $20-million investment will give Anglo a 40-percent interest in the project.

Anglo deposited $7 million of the total to cover for its initial entry cost into the Kalayaan project.

The agreement also calls for the formation of a joint venture company called Kalayaan Copper-Gold Resources Inc., to which the Kalayaan project will be assigned.

Depending on the outcome of the exploration work and Anglo's pre-feasibility study, Anglo and Manila Mining could consider undertaking a final feasibility phase which will determine whether banks could provide more financing for the project.

The final feasibility phase was estimated to cost $15 million to 20 million. Anglo will fund the additional work to gain another 20 percent interest in the Kalayaan project, Manila Mining director and corporate secretary Ethelwoldo Fernandez said in a disclosure.

Manila Mining started mining operations in Placer, Surigao del Norte in 1981. Until 2001, it was producing gold bullion through a Carbon-In-Pulp (CIP) plant. The company was producing copper concentrates (containing gold, silver and copper) from its copper flotation plant until July, 2001 when it suspended mining and milling operations after its authority to operate its tailings dam expired. Despite this, Manila Mining said several companies have expressed interest in the Kalayaan gold mine in the southern province of Surigao del Norte.

March 27-28, 2007
The Manila Hotel
Manila, Philippines
Publish Asia 2007
The No. 1 Networking Platform in Asia
Re-inventing for Today's Business. Creating for Tomorrow's Challenges.

PUBLISH ASIA 2007 OPENS TODAY

The Publish Asia 2007 Conference opens today at the Manila Hotel, with President Arroyo as guest of honor. The conference is organized by Ifra Asia, in cooperation with Publish Asia 2007 Philippine Committee (composed of the country's top four newspapers).

Murdoch MacLennan, chief executive officer of UK's Telegraph Media Group, will start off the convention, with a keynote presentation focusing on the convention's theme "Reinventing for Today's Business, Creating for Tomorrow's Challenges." MacLennan will discuss issues relevant to the publishing industry, like the major challenges it is currently facing; the importance of harnessing new technology to re-invent and re-structure; as well as the significance of high ethical standards and quality.

Today's convention will likewise discuss digital media, as well as business and strategy for the newspaper industry, including digital strategy, cross-promotional efforts, practical insights, and ways to attract new audiences.

"Without a doubt, the topics prepared for the two-day convention will provide insights for participants on ways by which they can deal with the evolving publishing industry," said Ifra Asia managing director Elaine Wong.

Some of the moderators who will headline today's sessions are Philippine Daily Inquirer's EVP and CEO David Valdes; Ifra, Germany research director and deputy CEO Manfred Werfel; Singapore Press Holding's Chew V. Ming; and Jo Christian Oterhals of Norway's VG Multimedia.

Around 400 delegates from all over Asia, including CEOs, presidents, CIOs, COOs, general managers, editors and writers from some of the region's leading newspapers are expected to join the conference.

"Publish Asia is the number one networking platform in the newspaper industry where people get together to learn from each other," said Barbie Atienza, Manila Bulletin public relations officer, and Publish Asia Philippine committee member. "In an industry where there are a lot of challenges, the only way to go is to keep on learning. Learning should not be limited to one's country. There should be an exchange of ideas between colleagues from other countries."

PUBLISH ASIA PHILIPPINE COMMITTEE
MANILA BULLETIN The Manila Times INQUIRER STAR

MetroPac, DMCI earmark ₱5B for '07 Maynilad capex

MAYNILAD WATER SERVICES INC. IS EARmarking P5 billion for its capital expenditure this year, primarily for operations and system improvement, officials of Metro Pacific Investment Corp. and DMCI Holdings Inc., said.

The Metro Pacific-DMCI Holdings team won a bidding last year for the right to operate the concession of Maynilad.

"When we bid for the company, the bid was divided into a minimum bid and a supplemental bid. The minimum bid is the amount the government would take, while the supplemental bid is the capex. It's a commitment to spend on the company whether it is used for repaying debt or for capex. Our plan is to get out of rehabilitation by paying the debt and to improve on the network by spending on capex," MPIC president Jose Ma. Lim said.

Lim reiterated his optimism that Maynilad would be out of rehabilitation this year after the MPIC-DMCI consortium resolved the company's $240 million in obligations to creditors and the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS).

DMCI's 50-50 joint venture with Metro Pacific Investments Corp. earlier bought an 83.47-percent stake of Maynilad for $500 million.

Maynilad distributes water to Caloocan, Manila, parts of Quezon City, Pasay, Valenzuela, Parañaque, Muntinlupa, Malabon, Navotas, Las Piñas and certain areas in Cavite. *Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson*

Intel introduces 'classmate' PC

INTEL CORP. HAS ANNOUNCED PLANS TO introduce this year Intel-powered personal computers designed for schoolchildren through a five-year, $1-billion program that would initially cover 25 developing countries including the Philippines.

Called the classmate PC, the 'affordable yet fully functional' laptops that run on Intel Celeron M processor is described as an education-oriented mobile computer, said Intel in a statement.

The Santa Clara, California-based company is making the move following successful volume shipments to Brazil and Mexico last year.

Intel said the classmate PC—"a personal learning assistant that looks like a textbook"—supports a collaborative learning environments specifically in primary schools.

"[Classmate PC] is part of Intel's on-going commitment and dedication to equip children around the world with technology that would help advance learning and development," said Willy Agatstein, Intel vice president, in the statement.

Volume shipments as well as pilot programs for the use of the classmate PC would be undertaken within the year in 25 countries including Chile, China, India, Indonesia, Libya, Malaysia, Nigeria, Pakistan, Thailand, Turkey and Vietnam.

Also, the firm plans for the PCs to be available in English, Arabic, simplified Chinese, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, Thai and Turkish.

The classmate PC is part of the Intel World Ahead Program to tap the combined power of technology, curriculum and teachers to improve education in developing countries.

To do this, Agatstein said the company was working with ministries of education in at least 30 countries to train 10 million teachers by the end of the decade and hopefully benefit more than 100 million students.

The official said Intel was working toward such goals by working with local industries to provide Internet connectivity, offering professional training for teachers through Intel® Teach program and developing local content such as the science and math curriculum based on Intel's skoolIT—an online digital learning tool.

"Our goal is to provide students with the 21st-century skills they need, such as collaboration and critical thinking, to help ensure that they're prepared to succeed in the knowledge-based economy," he said. *Ronnel W. Domingo*

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JIM Ellis, shown here at the new Marcus Foster Recreation Center in Philadelphia, took a group of city kids with no formal training and turned them into an official swim team. AP

> 'The premise was swimming, but I'd be lying if I said there weren't any life lessons'

ACTOR Terrence Howard portrays swim coach Ellis in the movie "Pride."

Real-life model for coach in new 'Pride' movie says there is much left to do

PHILADELPHIA (AP)—THE inner-city youth swimming program here could have inspired many movies, with its stories of children jumping into the pool as novices and climbing out with college scholarships and foundations for greater success.

But when Lionsgate decided to make a film about the program, it chose to focus on the coach and founder, Jim Ellis. "Pride" depicts Ellis' first year working for the Philadelphia Department of Recreation, when he turned a group of inner city black kids with no formal training into an official swim team.

"I had to watch it three or four times before I realized it was really about me, not just my team," Ellis said. "That was heavy."

He might have known it was coming, though. Actor Terrence Howard, now his Hollywood alter-ego, had spent about two months with him, observing the 5 a.m. and after-school practices and taking Ellis' coaching advice on his own strokes.

The experience showed Howard that to play Ellis, "you just have to care."

"I tried to find his spirit, his motivation, and look at some of the people he was impressed by—(Supreme Court Justice) Thurgood Marshall and (football star) Jim Brown—and try and emulate some of them at the same time," said the actor known for his Oscar-nominated performance in "Hustle & Flow."

Ellis' career began when his father pushed him off a boat at age 6 and told him to stay afloat. The sport came easily to him. While swimming competitively at Cheyney University, about 20 miles (32 kilometers) east of Philadelphia, he took a job as a water safety instructor at a city recreation center. It was a natural progression to starting a swim team, which just happened to be the city's first all-black squad.

More than 30 years later, he is at a new rec center—Marcus Foster, the one featured in the movie—and the team is more diverse and much more recognized. But he is still the same coach.

"I consider myself an artist," he said. "Each kid is my sculpture."

To sculpt a swimmer, he uses a technique that former team members say is a bit hard-nosed.

"I just try to appeal to their better sense of judgment," said Ellis, 59. "It's tough love, but like eating vegetables, I try to make them see all this hard work is good for you."

His real life is less sensational than the movie may lead viewers to believe. He has never punched a racist cop, come close to drowning a drug lord or romanced a city councilwoman who held the fate of his rec center in her hands.

Instead, he has seen communities come together around pizza and pretzel sales to support the team, put his swimmers up in borrowed tents in his parents' basement in Pittsburgh for a meet there, and held back tears when his team received a standing ovation as two of his swimmers broke records and qualified for the Olympic trials in one night.

Like the movie, however, in the early years, his team was occasionally met with condescension from more established programs, mostly out of state, and the perception that black athletes are better football or basketball players than swimmers.

"We'd get remarks like, 'the gym is down the hall,' or 'the football field is down the way,'" Ellis said. "We actually got more strength from that. It made us more determined to be successful."

Success came quickly, then became the norm. A number of his swimmers have come close to making the US Olympic team, and hundreds have earned college scholarships because of their talent in the pool.

Jason Webb, 32, credits his 20 years of swimming for Ellis with getting him into one of Philadelphia's top charter schools and winning him a full scholarship to the University of Virginia.

"The vision he had for me made me into the swimmer I was and the man I am," said the Philadelphia emergency room nurse. "The premise was swimming, but I'd be lying if I said there weren't any life lessons. He just told us to leave it all out there and have no regrets—give all you can whether in the pool, the classroom or other parts of life."

Ellis is still looking ahead. He said he hopes the movie will inspire a wealthy philanthropist to build top-flight pools in the inner city, or barring that, will at least spur more people to take up swimming.

His biggest hopes, of course, are for his own team.

"I still don't have a world record or an American record. I've never sent anyone to the Olympics," Ellis said. "Yeah, there's still a lot to do."

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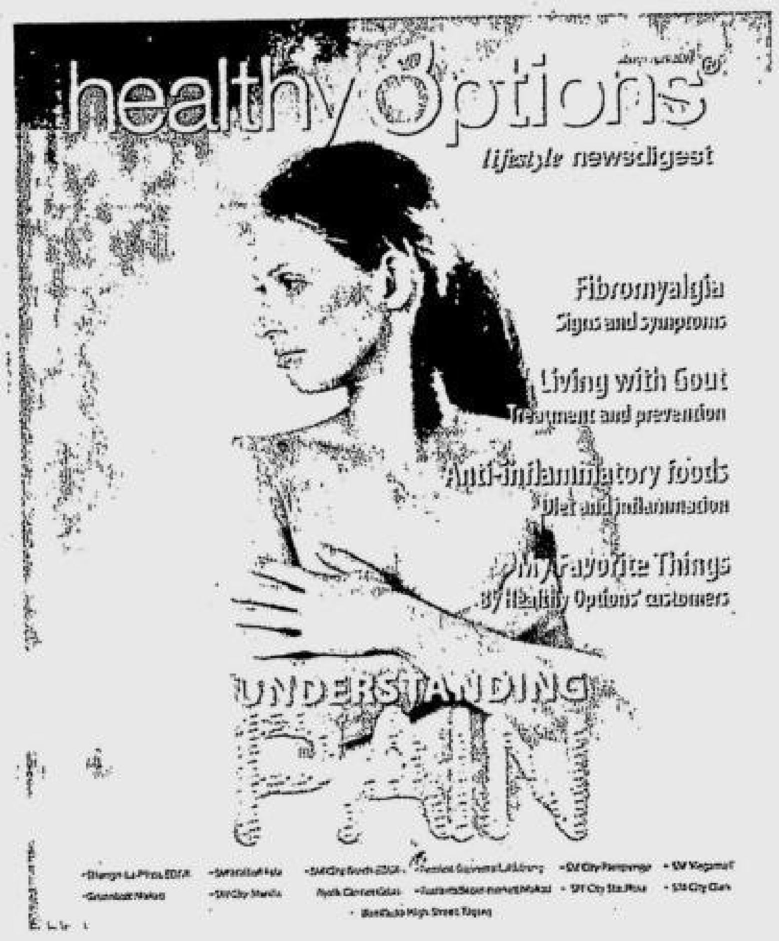

"UNDERSTANDING PAIN" IS THE COVER story of the Healthy Options Lifestyle Newsdigest March/April 2007 issue.

The magazine features several articles aimed at helping people better understand the risks, signs and symptoms, prevention and treatment of some common pains.

Find out how Celadrin, a natural product, works. Check out "Living with Gout" and learn about its treatment and prevention.

Also in the magazine are do's and don'ts for managing arthritis and "Migraine and its Common Triggers."

A problem of many women is tackled in "Dysmenorrhea: Menstrual Pain Relief."

The Healthy Options Lifestyle Newsdigest is offered free to customers. Visit any of the store's branches at level 1, Shangri-La Plaza Mall, Mandaluyong City; Rustan's Supermarket, Makati City; level 2, Festival Supermall, Filinvest, Alabang; ground level, Ayala Center, Cebu City; lower ground floor, SM City, North EDSA; level 2, SM City Manila; Greenbelt, Ayala Center, Makati City; level 2, SM Megamall B, EDSA, Mandaluyong City; SM Pampanga; SM Sta. Rosa, Laguna; SM Mall of Asia; SM Clark, and High Street, The Fort. Visit www.healthyoptions.com.ph.

Shown in photo is the latest issue of Healthy Options Lifestyle Newsdigest with their cover story titled "Understanding Pain."

Keep cholesterol under control

ENSURE YOUR HEART'S HEALTH BY KEEPing your cholesterol levels in check all the time.

One important and relatively easy way to do this is to watch what you eat. The American Heart Association says fruits, vegetables, grains and legumes tend to be low in fat and have no cholesterol. They are also good sources of dietary fiber, complex carbohydrates and vitamins.

The American Heart Association (AHA) recommends eating foods high in complex carbohydrates and fiber. Large amounts of soluble fiber, such as pectin and oat bran, in a diet low in saturated fat, may reduce total cholesterol and LDL cholesterol.

LDL or low density lipoprotein (LDL) is considered bad cholesterol. The American Heart Association says it can slowly build up and clog the inner walls of the arteries restricting the flow of blood to the heart and brain.

Soluble fiber like oats has been shown to help lower blood cholesterol, thus reducing the risk of coronary heart disease. A high-fiber diet may also help reduce the risk of diabetes and colon and rectal cancer.

To make the most of a high-fiber diet, AHA also offers these other tips:

- Replace low-fiber foods (white bread, white rice, candy and chips) with high-fiber foods (whole-grain bread, brown rice, fruits and vegetables).
- Try to eat more raw vegetables and fresh fruit, including skins when appropriate. Cooking vegetables can reduce fiber content.
- Eat high-fiber foods at every meal. Bran cereal for breakfast is a good start. Try to include some fruits, vegetables, whole grains and beans in your diet as well.
- If necessary, take a dietary fiber supplement.
- Increase your fiber intake gradually to give your body time to adjust. Drink six to eight 8-oz. glasses of fluids a day.

Various products are now available in the market to make it easy to switch to a healthy diet. The Gardenia Honey Oat Loaf was the result of a partnership between Gardenia Bakeries Philippines Inc. and Quaker Oats. It combines the nutritive goodness of honey and oats.

Studies conducted in the United States suggest that dark-colored honey, such as buckwheat honey, contain higher levels of antioxidants than light-colored varieties. Anti-oxidants fight disease-causing oxygen free radicals.

Studies presented at the 2006 American Chemical Society suggested that honey might have the same level of disease-fighting antioxidants as some fruits.

Quaker Oats web site (quakeroatmeal.com) reports on the nutritional benefits of oats like lowering the risk of developing heart disease and certain types of cancers.

INQUIRER
It's all over;
Marcos flees!

What's the news behind the news?
- Letty Jimenez-Magsanoc
Editor in Chief, Philippine Daily Inquirer

What nonsense is this?
- Eugenia Duran-Apostol
Founder, Philippine Daily Inquirer

They launched the Philippine Daily Inquirer in defiance of the news blackout after Ninoy's assassination. Since then, Inquirer has become a beacon for fearless journalism in the country. As a fitting tribute, these champions of press freedom have made it to the venerable list of Time Magazine's Asian Heroes. Visit www.inquirer.net to know more about this campaign.

Dare to ask.
Be an Inquirer.

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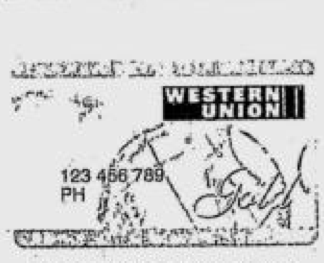

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*Terms and conditions apply. Promo duration is from January 27, 2007 - December 31, 2007. See countertop teasers for details. Visit www.airphils.com or text AP to 700088 for Smart and Talk N' Text Subscribers only.

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Make it a fruitful summer

WANTING TO SHED THE EXCESS pounds you gained over the holidays before hitting the beaches this summer?

Why not get into a five-a-day fruit program in the next few weeks?

Combined with a good and healthy workout, you can trim the fat from your body without depriving it of much-needed nutrients.

Fruit Magic, the country's premier juice bar, promotes the five-a-day regimen advocated by the World Health Organization. It believes that including fresh fruits in your daily diet can help a lot in making your body fit for summer.

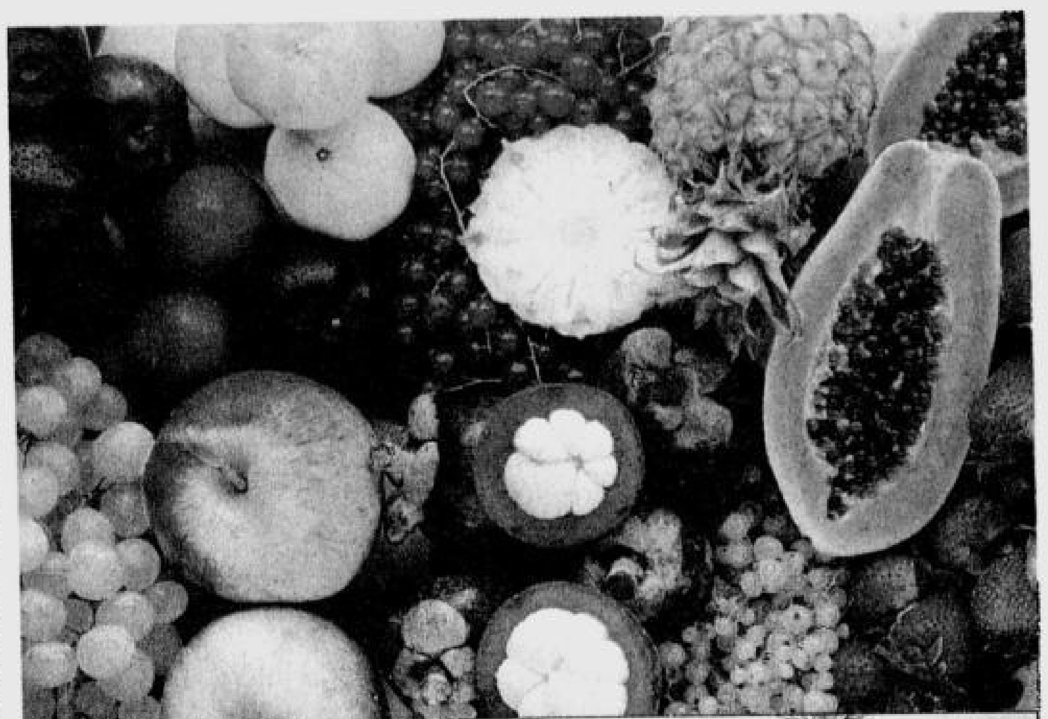
Alan Escalona, CEO of Fruit Magic, said fresh fruits contained natural sugars like fructose and were packed with vitamins and minerals needed to fuel the body without the fats.

Since most fruits are rich in fiber, he said including them in the diet would have the added benefit of cleansing and detoxifying the body.

For those interested in a fruity slimming diet, Fruit Magic has the following tips:

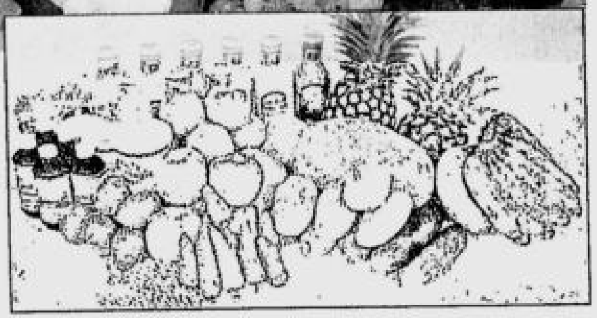
FRUIT Magic can help you start your fresh-fruit diet.

- Fight fat with fiber—Fruits that are rich in fiber help absorb fats and cholesterol, allowing the body to recover faster by flushing out these unhealthy substances. Fiber-rich fruits like avocado, papaya, guava, cantaloupe, orange, apricots, mango, strawberries, apples, kiwi and grapefruit can help you slim down faster by absorbing excess fat.
- Detoxify with citrus—Oranges, lemon and other fruits rich in Vitamin C are not only great to drink but can also help remove toxins in the body. For a slimming diet, it is best to take freshly squeezed citrus fruits, since they have the highest concentration of Vitamin C.
- More power, less calories—A fruit diet can provide the body with much-needed energy without the bad calories. Fruits also do not give you that full-belly feeling. Control your craving for starchy food by eating more fruits.
- Lose weight faster but add variety—Typical weight lost during a three-day fruit-diet program can be from one to three kilos. However, a diet consisting only of fruits can leave you slightly weaker at the start. Fruit diets consisting of citrus-rich fruits can also lead to diarrhea. To avoid these inconveniences, mix different types of fruits.
- Slim and glow—Fruit diets not only allow the body to lose weight, but also help it rejuvenate. Nutrients in fruits are great for the skin, making it more supple and vibrant, as the body flushes out the accumulated toxins from eating unhealthy food.



FRUITS' fiber helps absorb fats and cholesterol and flushes them out.

If you cannot decide what fruits to have during the diet program or do not want the hassle of preparing them, just go to the nearest Fruit Magic juice bar and order a freshly squeezed nectar, all-natural shake or juice.



YOU can enjoy fruits fresh or as juices and shakes.

ADIDAS MOA store owner Philip Go and marketing manager Goody Custodio with guests

Star-studded store opening

ADIDAS, A PREMIER SPORTING brand, has opened a store in the largest mall in Asia.

The event was attended by some of the hottest names in sports, entertainment, music and fashion.

It was ushered in by the colorful National Basketball Association All-Star Weekend exhibit. The new Adidas store will house the All-Star Weekend collection and the NBA Originals collection.

Also to be carried by the new store are other Adidas premium lines including choice pieces for running, basketball, tennis and gym.

The opening of the Adidas store was graced by stars from different basketball leagues. They included Philippine Basketball Association player Larry Fonacier and coaches Ryan Gregorio and Ronnie Magsanoc.

Popular JC Intal of the University Athletics Association of the Philippines and Philippine Basketball League (PBL) was also there.

The National Collegiate Athletic Association was represented by players Jay-R Taganas, JR Tecson and, also from the PBL, Rey Guevarra.

Actor and model Polo Ravales completed the star-studded lineup for the store opening. Guest performer was the band Spongecola.

The new Adidas Mall of Asia concept store is located at the ground floor, South Arcade of the SM Mall of Asia.

ADIDAS store executives, basketball players and other celebrities cut the ceremonial ribbon.

Specialists stress need to stimulate early learning

PARENTS SHOULD BE AWARE THAT brain development starts as early as infancy.

In fact, experts say a baby even starts responding to all types of stimuli even while inside the mother's womb.

During the recent Mommy Moments with Dawn Zulueta, a special media gathering at Makati Shangri-La hotel, experts stressed the need for the right nutrition and development activities to ensure a child's proper mental development.

Zulueta-Lagdameo and her year-old son Jacobo are the newest endorsers of Gain Plus Advance.

Dr. Marcelino "Mark" G. Reysio-Cruz III, a diplomate of the Philippine Pediatric Society and a fellow of the Philippine Society for Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrics, said a kicking baby in the mother's womb is a clear sign of early learning response.

The kick is the fetus' way of telling its mother it is experiencing discomfort, he said.

Another sign of early brain development, he said, was the newborn's awareness of his/her mother's presence.

DAWN Zulueta-Lagdameo and year-old Jacobo endorse Gain Plus Advance.

As they grow, Cruz said babies develop curiosity about everything in their environment. Among other things, their eyes follow moving objects, hence, the practice of having mobiles on cribs.

He added that babies develop a visual preference for faces and, even at their young age, show a liking for pleasant faces.

Cruz said many factors affect a child's early learning development. Genetics is one such factor. Children inherit the parents' intellectual capacity. Environment also plays a role so the choice of toys and activities is important. They should stimulate a child's thinking process.

Eva Fetalino-Perez of Gymboree Play and Music supported the notion of a strong link between playing and learning. Gymboree offers an innovative parent-child program for newborns and children up to 5 years of age.

Perez said a child's brain is most active in the first three years, growing to 80 percent of its adult size. Parents and caregivers have to nurture a child's development during this time by exposing him/her to stimulating age-appropriate activities, she said.

Cruz also underscored the importance of proper nutrition in early learning. He said certain vitamins and nutrients support a child's intellectual development. Gain Plus Advance has a unique combination of nutrients like DHA (docosahexaenoic acid), taurine, and choline to help support the child's brain, vision and memory during the formative stage.

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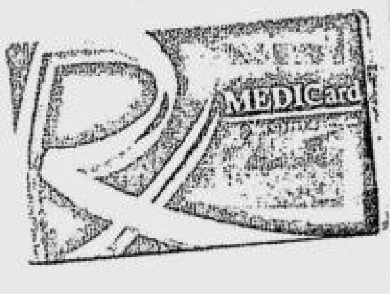
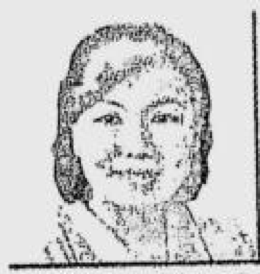
What is Menopause? And what are the changes associated with it?

Menopause, or the "change of life", is the time in a woman's life when her period stops for 12 months in a row (with no other causes, such as pregnancy or illness, for this change). Symptoms can begin several years before that, and these symptoms can last for months or years after. Around the age of 40 to 45, when a woman's body slowly makes less hormones (estrogen and progesterone), she might notice that her period may no longer be regular. It could be lighter than normal, or heavier. Periods may be shorter or last longer. Or, without warning, there is a feeling of being very warm during the day or in the middle of the night. This time of change, called perimenopause, often begins several years before the last menstrual period. It lasts for a year after the last period, the point in time known as menopause. A full year without a period is needed before a woman is said to have been "through menopause." Postmenopause follows menopause and lasts the rest of her life. Common symptoms of menopause include: change in pattern of periods (as described above), hot flashes (or hot flushes), night sweats (sometimes followed by a chill), trouble sleeping through the night (with or without night sweats), vaginal dryness, mood swings, feeling crabby, crying spells (probably because of lack of sleep), trouble focusing, feeling mixed up or confused, hair loss or thinning on her head. Two common health problems can start to happen at menopause: osteoporosis and heart disease. Consultations with specialists should be done to find out what to do to stay healthy after menopause.





Dr. Catherine Hui Tin Lim provides us with this week's discussion on Menopause. Dr. Lim, a medicine graduate of the University of Sto. Tomas, took her residency training for a specialization in Obstetrics & Gynecology at Chinese General Hospital and later, had her subspecialization in Perinatology at Philippine Children's Medical Center, Kyushu University, Tokyo Women's Medical Center and Eastern Virginia University Hospital. She is a founding fellow of the Philippine Society of Maternal and Fetal Medicine. Her work on the "Enhancement of Breastfeeding among Hypertensive Mothers" was awarded the Dr. Enrique Ostrea Jr. Research Award in Perinatal Medicine. MEDICard members may avail for her consultations at Metropolitan Medical Center from Monday to Saturday, 10am to 3pm.

MEDICard's Medical Director, Dr. Nicky Montoya answers questions on health through the assistance and expertise of MEDICard's network of accredited specialists. Write to Dr. Nicky or E-mail him at inquiry@medicardphils.com for your inquiries on health matters.

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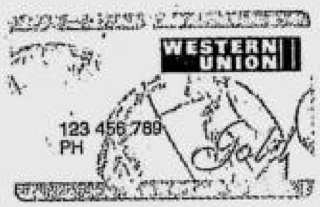

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*Terms and conditions apply. Promo duration is from January 27, 2007 - December 31, 2007. See countertop teasers for details.

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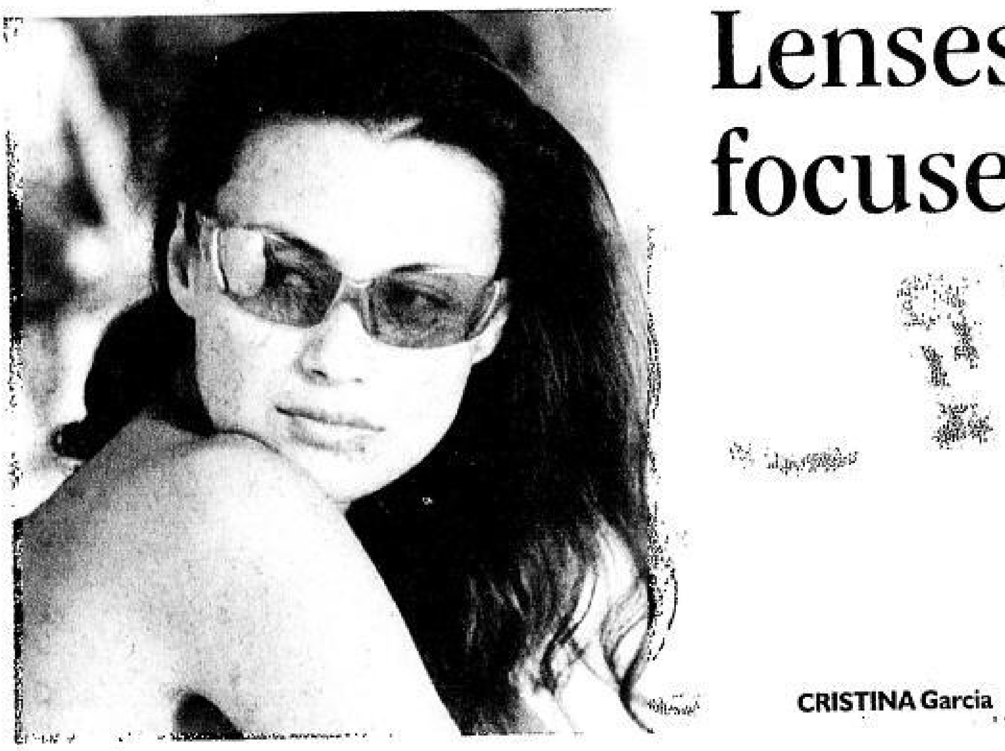
WESTERN UNION
FAST, RELIABLE, WORLDWIDE MONEY TRANSFER

Lenses keep you focused on your game



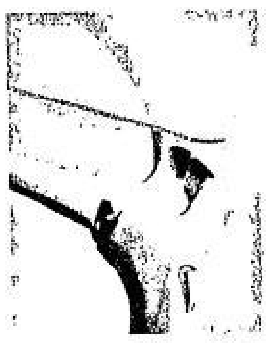
CRISTINA Garcia

NIKE VISION ENSURES that you are at the top of your game with its different eyewear enhancements designed to suit your particular passion.

For extreme sports aficionados, the Nike Flying Lenses feature improved airflow that reduces fogging and enhances ventilation over standard lock-in frames. The glasses, which attach at the nose, remain in position even when the frame flexes for superb optics.

The Nike Max Optics has an enlarged visual sweet spot that is 51 percent larger than that of the competition, letting you see more of your game. No more missed fastballs, no more getting lost in the green: Nike Max Optics lets you See Sport better.

Nike Vision also takes into account not only winning the race, but the actual journey through the tracks.



Enhancements help reduce fogging.

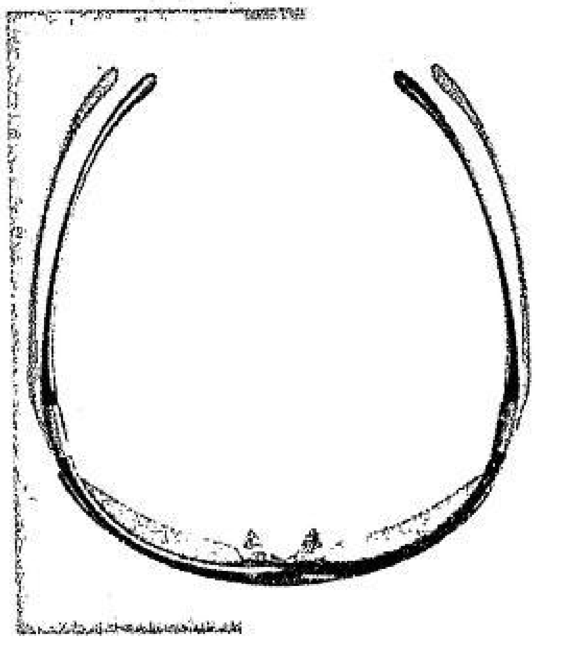
The Nike Max Speed Tint reduces road glare with its engineered color, relaxing your eyes and enhancing visibility while you keep your eyes on the prize.

Adapt to any situation with the Nike Interchangeable. With no one lens suitable for all situations, the Nike Interchangeable allows you to switch lenses to suit your needs. The lenses are changed easily and are held securely by the frame. Nike Interchangeable is available in a number of Nike styles.

Other Nike eyewear enhancements include ventilated nose bridges that promote airflow to reduce fogging, and keep the frame in place even when you are moving at full speed.

Nike shades are available at all Nike Timegear stores, Sabater Pascual, Exclusive Optical and Ideal Vision.

ERIK Waltie



Different eyewear enhancements are designed to suit everyone's passion.

PRINT MORE AT 50% LESS.

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Promo extended March 31, 2007.

The HP LaserJet 1020 Printer is an affordable laser printer for the cost-conscious office. It delivers high-quality LaserJet printing in a compact size, and at a price any business can afford. So, get the HP LaserJet 1020 Printer now and find out how affordable it is to enjoy high-quality laser printing with a 50% discount on your next toner.

Promotion Mechanics:
Enjoy 50% off on your next black toner when you purchase an HP LaserJet 1020 Printer until March 31, 2007. Present promotion stickers from specially marked HP LaserJet 1020 Printers, together with completed discount voucher and proof of purchase to participating dealers to get the 50% rebate. Redemption period up to May 31, 2007 only.

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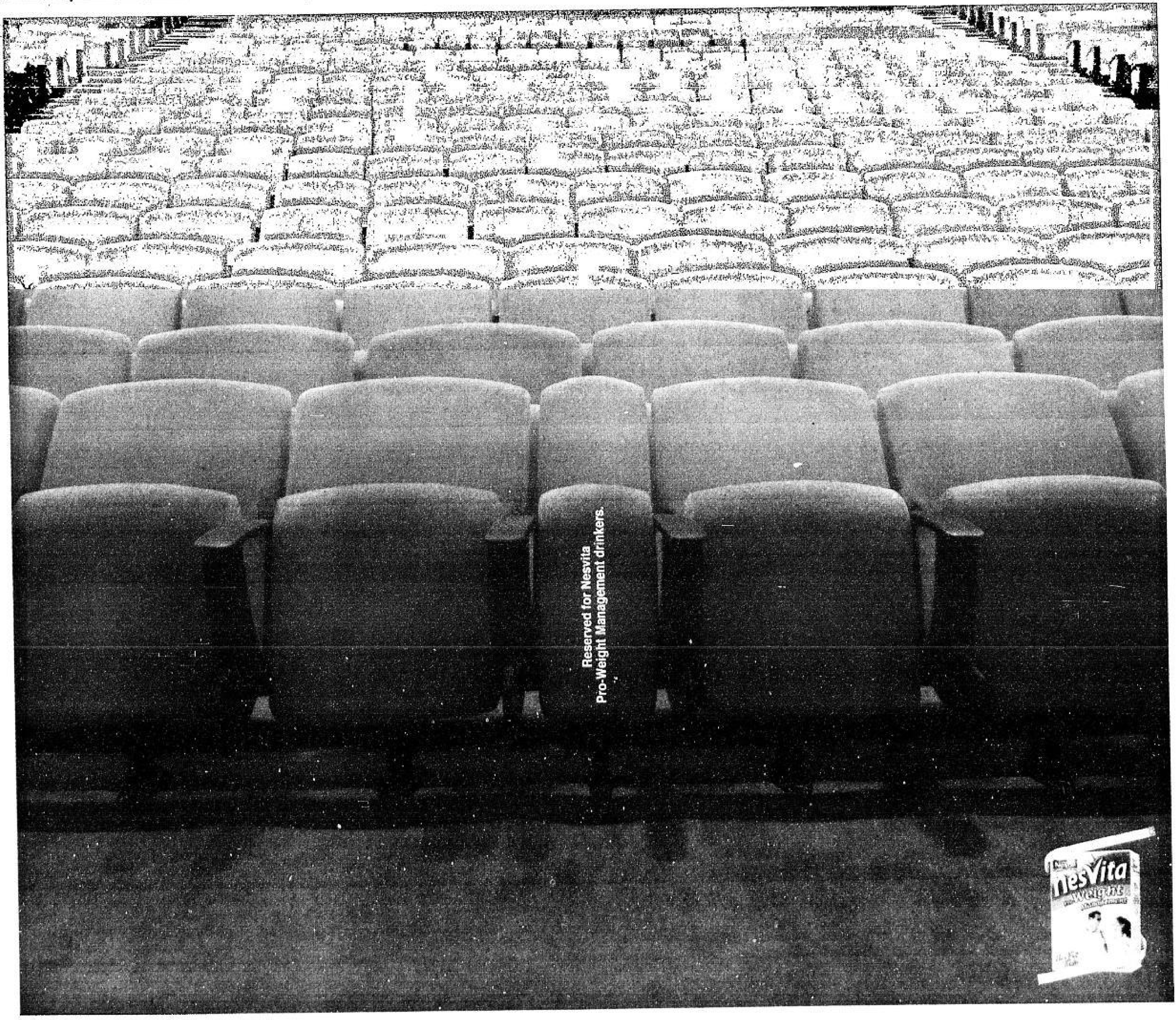

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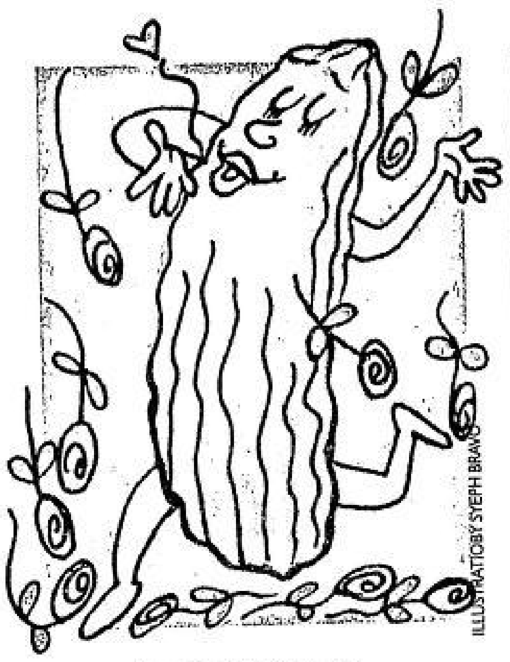
ILLUSTRATION BY SYEPH BRAVO

INSIDE OUT

Cory Quirino

Take the bitter for the sweet

IT'S A FRUIT, A VEGETABLE and an herb rolled into one. It may be bitter but its potency is sweet music to diabetics.

This medicinal plant is known by different names and is cultivated around the world. In Japan it is called *nigaluri*; China, *fukwa*; Indonesia, *pare*; India, *karela*; North America, bitter melon/gourd; and the Philippines, *ampalaya*.

Momordica charantia combines Greek and Latin words. *Charantia* is Greek for beautiful flower while *momordicus* is Latin for bitter.

Said to have originated in Africa, the useful plant has been studied by many botanists and nutritionists all over the world. Here are their findings:

Humble but powerful

How a humble plant could have the power to control blood sugar levels amazes many, particularly doctors and researchers. Frank Murray, author of "Ampalaya–Nature's Remedy for Type 1 and Type 2 Diabetes," and his colleagues have found that the vegetable had "consistent hypoglycemic effects" (lowers blood sugar).

In the Philippine Journal of Internal Medicine, doctors Reynaldo F. Rosales and Ricardo E. Fernando of St. Luke's Hospital report that the *ampalaya* fruit alone prepared as tea can be very useful in the "treatment of diabetes."

What is diabetes?

There are three types of diabetes.

Type 1 (insulin-dependent) is when the pancreas is unable to make insulin.

Type 2 (non-insulin dependent) is when the body is unable to use properly the insulin made by the pancreas.

Type 3 (gestational diabetes) is a form of glucose intolerance diagnosed in women during pregnancy.

Diabetes mellitus (from the Greek word siphon or the passing of water) has been around since ancient times. Today it is considered a lifestyle disease, aggravated by a way of life characterized by high carbohydrate/sugar diet and no exercise.

Complications arising from diabetes include heart disease, strokes, high blood pressure, blindness, kidney/nervous system/dental diseases.

What's in this fruit?

A closer look at this vegetable reveals that it is packed with nutrients like vitamins A, B, C; calcium, iron, alkaloids. It is not only used to control sugar problems but also acne breakouts, infertility, constipation, tumors, HIV infections, fatty liver, hardening of the arteries. It has also been used by the Chinese as an aphrodisiac, laxative and emetic (vomit inducer).

Most studies showed that compounds derived from the leaves and fruits contained hypoglycemic or sugar-lowering properties.

Versatile

Ampalaya may be eaten fresh (as a salad), cooked (as a vegetable dish) or drunk as a

TAKE/ D3

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LUZON: Sm Sta Rosa- Mar 27-Apr 2 • CSI Mall - Dagupan- Apr 13-19 • Pacific Mall -Legaspi- May 4-15 • Sm Pampanga- May 25-31
VISAYAS: BQ Mall -Bohol- Mar 26-Apr 2 • Peoples Park- Tacloban- April 13-20 • Ayala Center- Cebu- Apr 26-May 1 • Sm Iloilo- May 4-10 • Robinson Bacolod- May 14-19
MINDANAO: Limketkai Mall- CDO- Mar 23-Apr 1- Gaisano Mall -Davao- April 12-20 • KCC Mall- Gen Santos- Apr 22-May 1.

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Per DTI NCR Permit No 0666 Series of 2007.

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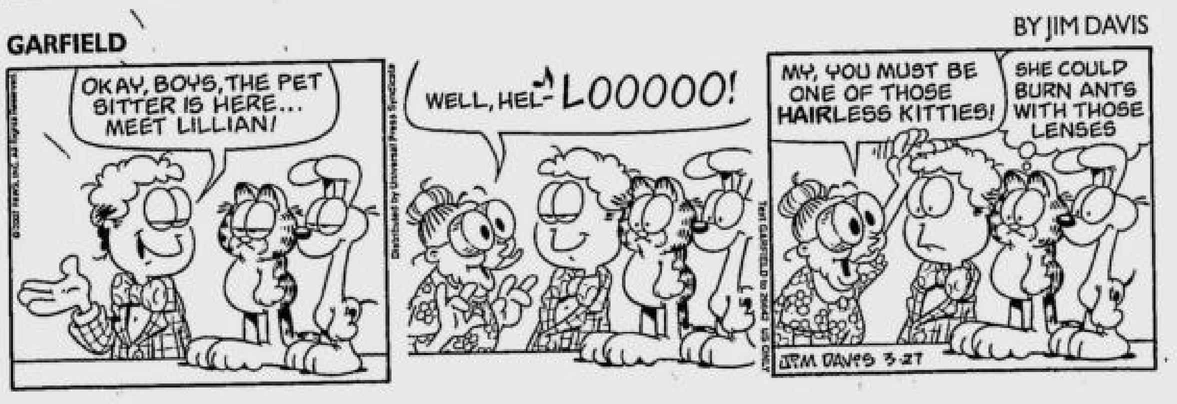
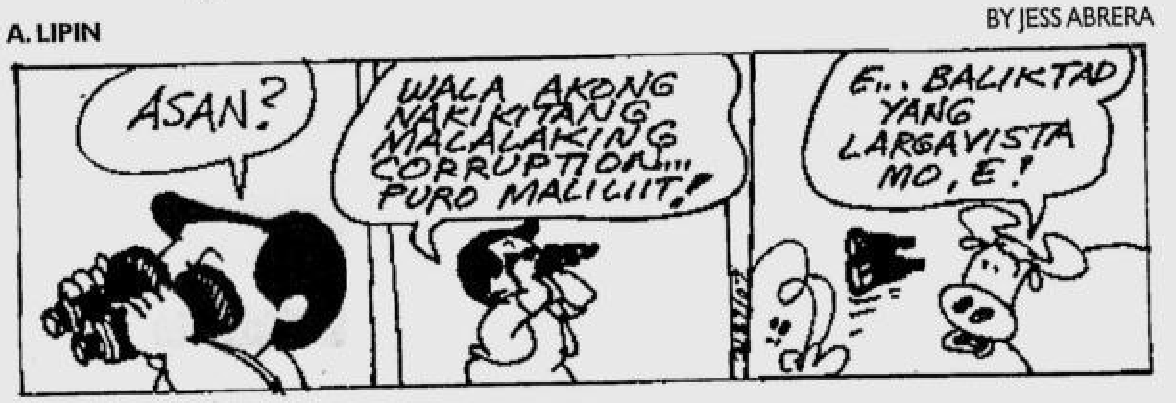
GARFIELD

BY JIM DAVIS


OKAY, BOYS, THE PET SITTER IS HERE... MEET LILLIAN!
WELL, HEL-LOOOOO!
MY, YOU MUST BE ONE OF THOSE HAIRLESS KITTIES!
SHE COULD BURN ANTS WITH THOSE LENSES
JIM DAVIS 3-27

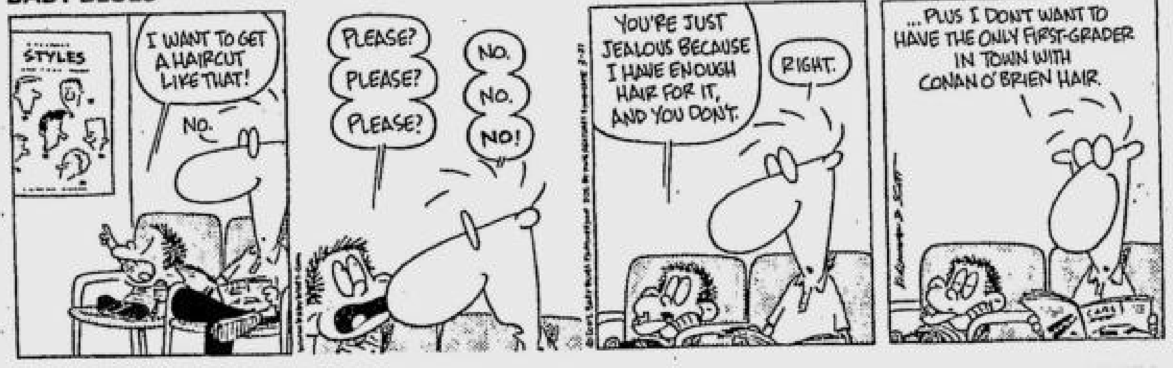
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


ASAN?
WALA AKONG NAKIKITANG MALALAKING CORRUPTION... PURO MALILIIT!
E.. BALIKTAD YANG LARGAVISTA MO, E!

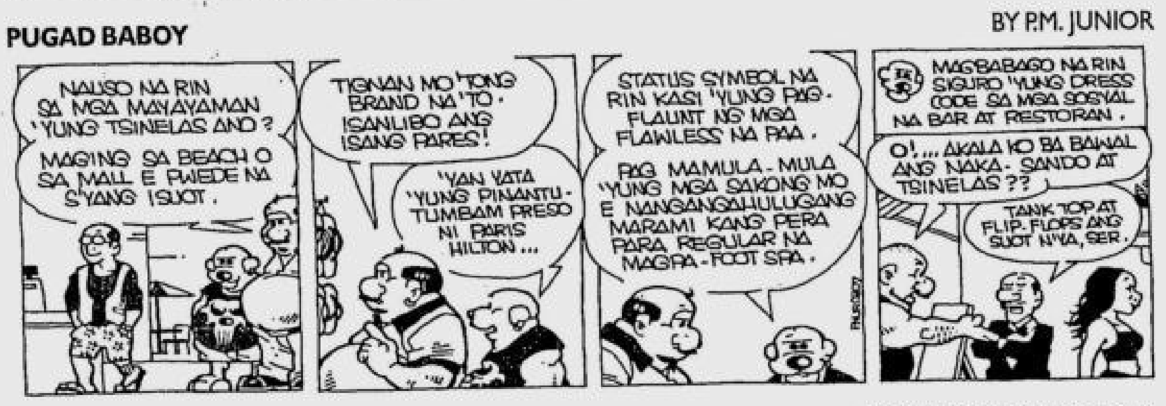
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


STYLES
I WANT TO GET A HAIRCUT LIKE THAT!
NO.
PLEASE?
PLEASE?
PLEASE?
NO.
NO.
NO!
YOU'RE JUST JEALOUS BECAUSE I HAVE ENOUGH HAIR FOR IT, AND YOU DON'T.
RIGHT.
...PLUS I DON'T WANT TO HAVE THE ONLY FIRST-GRADER IN TOWN WITH CONAN O'BRIEN HAIR.

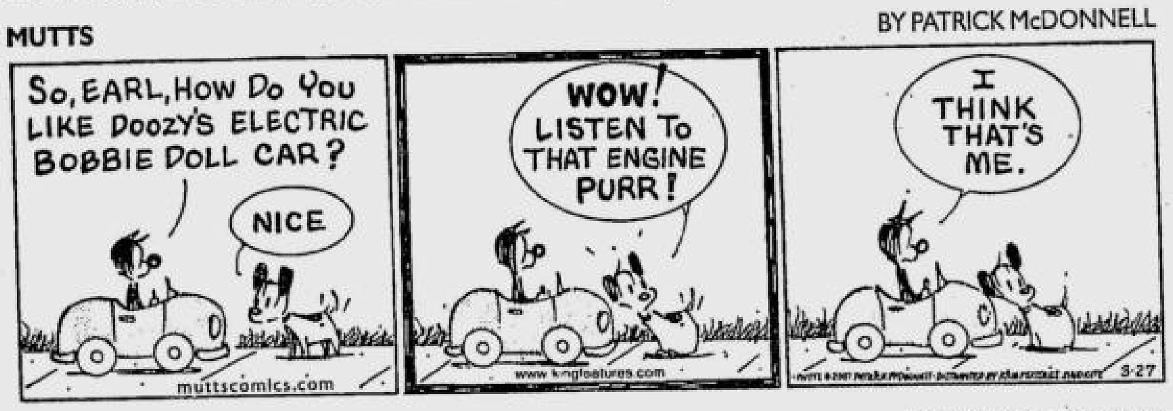
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


NAUSO NA RIN SA MGA MAYAYAMAN 'YUNG TSINELAS ANO?
MAGING SA BEACH O SA MALL E PWEDE NA S'YANG ISUOT.
TIGNAN MO 'TONG BRAND NA 'TO. ISANLIBO ANG ISANG PARES!
'YAN YATA 'YUNG PINANTU-TUMBAM PRESO NI PARIS HILTON...
STATUS SYMBOL NA RIN KASI 'YUNG PAG-FLAUNT NG MGA FLAWLESS NA PAA.
PAG MAMULA-MULA 'YUNG MGA SAKONG MO E NANGANGAHULUGANG MARAMI KANG PERA PARA REGULAR NA MAGPA-FOOT SPA.
MAGBABAGO NA RIN SIGURO 'YUNG DRESS CODE SA MGA SOSYAL NA BAR AT RESTORAN.
O!... AKALA KO BA BAWAL ANG NAKA-SANDO AT TSINELAS??
TANK TOP AT FLIP-FLOPS ANG SUOT N'YA, SER.

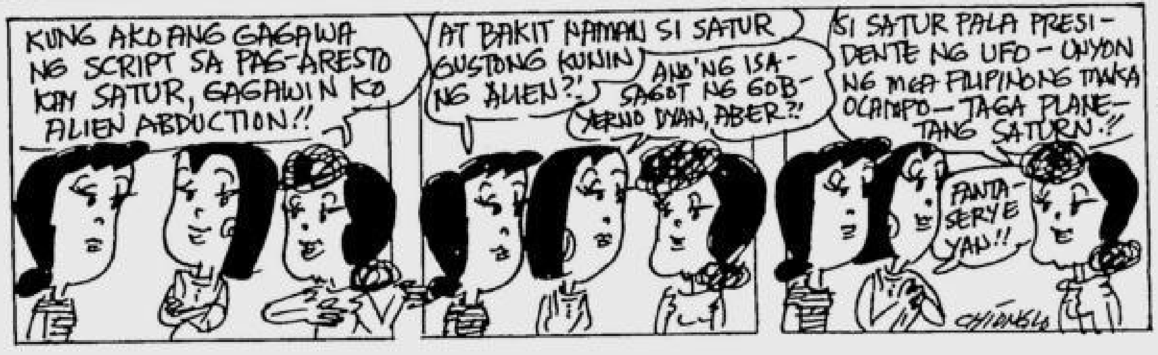
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


So, EARL, HOW Do You LIKE Doozy's ELECTRIC BOBBIE DOLL CAR?
NICE
WOW! LISTEN To THAT ENGINE PURR!
I THINK THAT'S ME.
muttscomics.com
www.kingfeatures.com
3-27

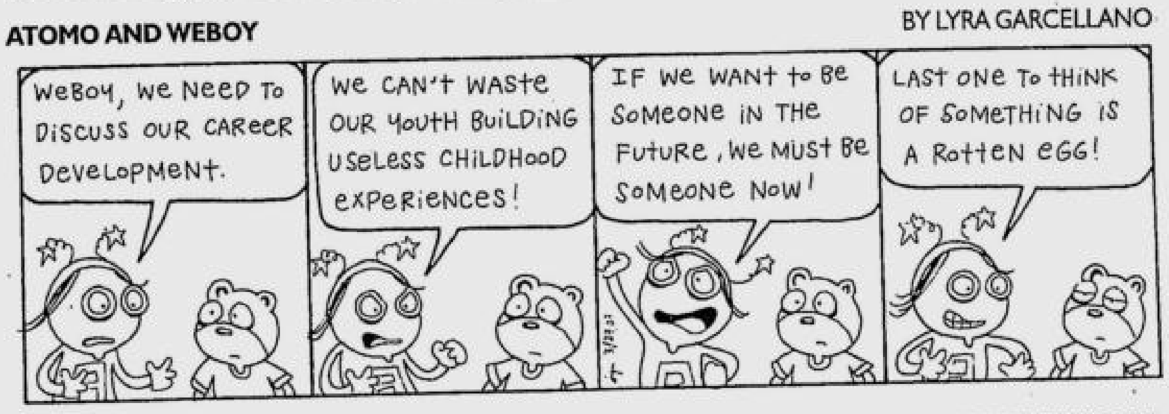
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


KUNG AKO ANG GAGAWA NG SCRIPT SA PAG-ARESTO KAY SATUR, GAGAWIN KO ALIEN ABDUCTION!!
AT BAKIT NAMAN SI SATUR GUSTONG KUNIN NG ALIEN?!
ANO'NG ISA-SAGOT NG GOB-YERNO DYAN, ABER?!
SI SATUR PALA PRESI-DENTE NG UFO—UNYON NG MGA FILIPINONG MAKA OCAMPO—TAGA PLANE-TANG SATURN!!
FANTA-SERYE YAN!!
CHIONGLO

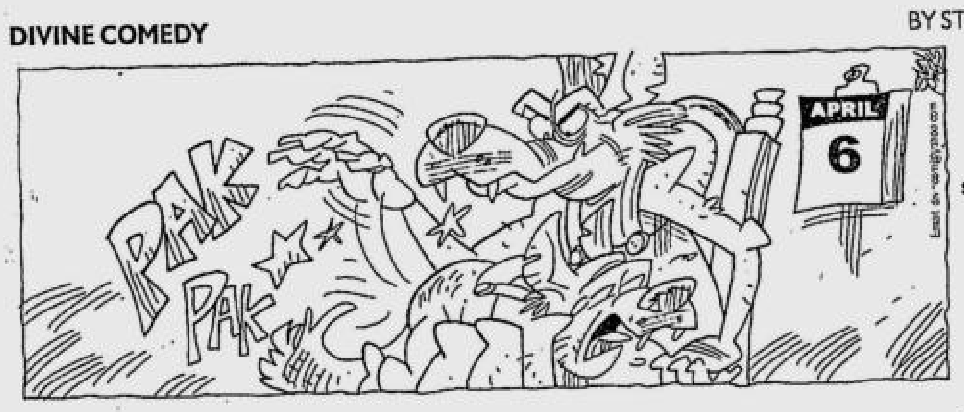
ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


WeBoy, We NeeD To DiScuss OUR CAReeR DeveLoPMeNt.
We CAN'T WASte OUR YoutH BuiLDiNG USeLess CHiLDHooD eXPeRieNces!
IF We WANT to Be SoMeONe iN THE FutuRe, We MuSt Be SoMeONe Now!
LASt ONe To tHiNK OF SoMeTHiNG iS A RotteN eGG!

DIVINE COMEDY

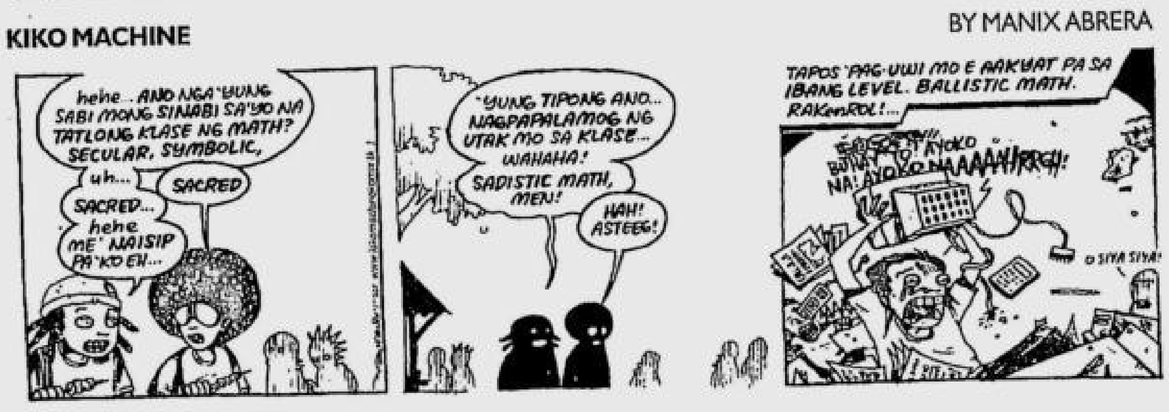
BY STEVEN PABALINAS


APRIL
6
PAK
PAK

PINALO NI
BIG BAD WOLF
ANG KANYANG
ANAK NA SI
SMALL BAD WOLF
DAHIL KUMAIN
ITO NG
THREE LITTLE
PIGS
SA ARAW NG
BIYERNES
SANTO

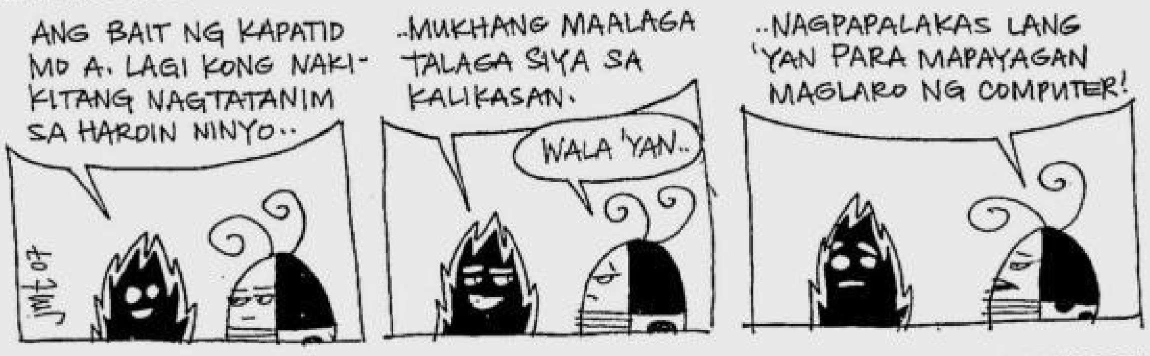
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


hehe... ANO NGA 'YUNG SABI MONG SINABI SA'YO NA TATLONG KLASE NG MATH? SECULAR, SYMBOLIC, uh...
SACRED
SACRED... hehe ME' NAISIP PA KO EH...
'YUNG TIPONG ANO... NAGPAPALAMOG NG UTAK MO SA KLASE... WAHAHA!
SADISTIC MATH, MEN!
HAH! ASTEEG!
TAPOS 'PAG-UWI MO E AAKYAT PA SA IBANG LEVEL. BALLISTIC MATH. RAKenROL!...
AYOKO NA! AYOKO NAAAAHRRGH!
O SIYA SIYA!

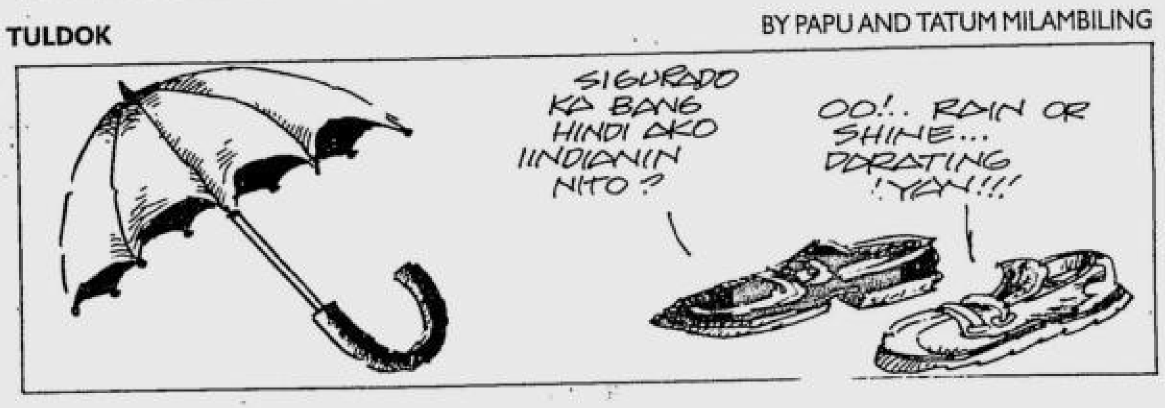
MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


ANG BAIT NG KAPATID MO A. LAGI KONG NAKI-KITANG NAGTATANIM SA HARDIN NINYO..
..MUKHANG MAALAGA TALAGA SIYA SA KALIKASAN.
WALA 'YAN..
..NAGPAPALAKAS LANG 'YAN PARA MAPAYAGAN MAGLARO NG COMPUTER!
JMT 07

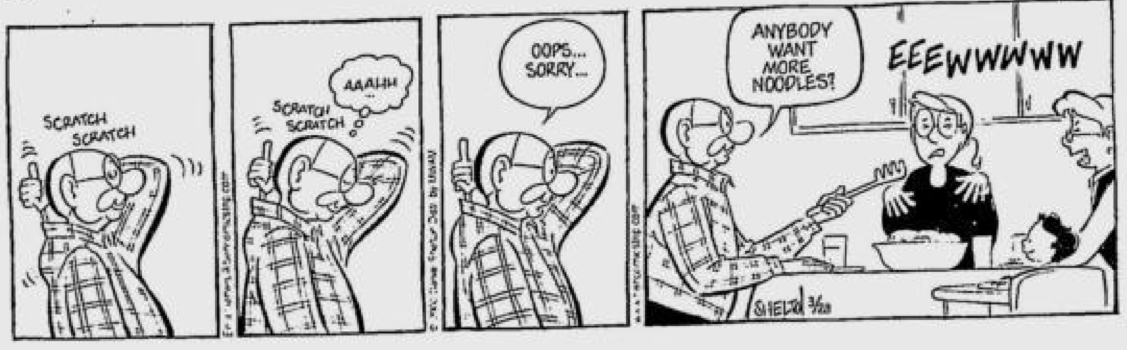
TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING

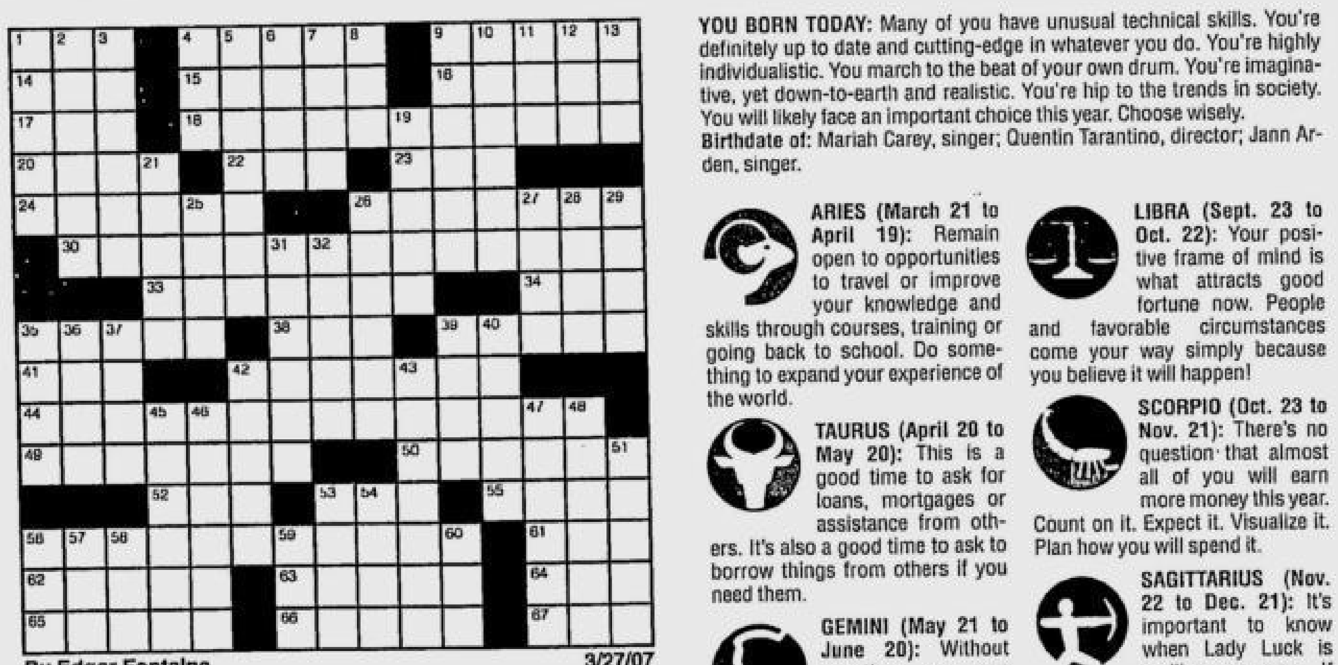

SIGURADO KA BANG HINDI AKO IINDIANIN NITO?
OO!.. RAIN OR SHINE... DDRATING 'YAN!!!

BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


SCRATCH SCRATCH
SCRATCH SCRATCH
AAAHH
OOPS... SORRY...
ANYBODY WANT MORE NOODLES?
EEEWWWWW
SHELTON 3/20

DAILY CROSSWORD



By Edgar Fontaine
Dighton, MA

3/27/07

ACROSS
1 CDs' ancestors
4 Musical study
9 Adam and Mae
14 Online guffaw
15 Discussion
16 In progress
17 Big galoot
18 High-jump style
20 Disfigure
22 Isl. off Australia
23 Tic-tac-toe win
24 Former Scottish county
26 Miraculous cure shrine
30 Road test maneuver
33 Type of spoonbill
34 Afore
35 Persian rulers
38 Schedule abbr.
39 __ "The Body" Ventura
41 __ Romana
42 Capital on the Delaware
44 Monongahela's partner
49 Athlete's no-no
50 Battery parts
52 Exec. order
53 Orange seed
55 Arizona city on the Colorado
56 Puzzle theme
61 Pullman or sleeper
62 Central Park canine statue
63 Hard liquor
64 Heart-chart letters
65 Of bees
66 Loafed
67 Told ya!

DOWN
1 Domesticated guanaco
2 Warhol's genre
3 Santa's vehicle
4 Like some apts.
5 Plays a flute
6 Bear in the air
7 Localizes a soundtrack
8 Down Under bird
9 Exit
10 Strong attempt
11 Our star
12 Also
13 The Racer's Edge
19 Arledge of TV sports
21 Gift of the magi
25 Gorcey and McKern
26 Repetitive recital
27 Membership payments
28 Goes astray
29 Dundee dagger
31 Looked intently
32 Like some cereals
35 Spring resorts
36 Sentry's command
37 Wheel connector
39 Sign on
40 Diplomatic agent
42 Leg part
43 Classic circus movie
45 Mistakes list
46 Takes place
47 Brings out
48 Do over
51 Military three-striper
53 Walk heavily
54 Revered figure
56 TV guide abbr.
57 "The Raven" poet's initials
58 Letters for 41
59 Sash for a kimono
60 Part of MD

Monday's Puzzle Solved

H	A	R	R	O	W		S	O	A	R		D	A	D
I	G	U	A	N	A		H	A	R	E		I	R	A
M	O	T	H	E	R	E	A	R	T	H		S	I	N
			S	L	I	N	K	S		E	D	N	A	S
S	O	B		A	L	D	O		G	E	R	E		
T	H	O	R	N	Y			A	L	L	E	Y	E	S
R	E	S	E	E		C	A	G	E		S	W	A	P
A	N	T	S		S	O	R	E	N		S	O	R	E
P	R	O	P		A	P	E	S		V	E	R	N	E
S	Y	N	E	R	G	Y			L	A	D	L	E	D
		G	L	E	E		S	T	U	N		D	R	Y
L	I	L	L	E		N	A	O	M	I	S			
A	D	O		D	A	I	L	Y	P	L	A	N	E	T
M	O	B		I	S	N	T		U	L	S	T	E	R
A	L	E		T	H	E	Y		R	A	S	H	L	Y

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3/27/07

HOROSCOPE

YOU BORN TODAY: Many of you have unusual technical skills. You're definitely up to date and cutting-edge in whatever you do. You're highly individualistic. You march to the beat of your own drum. You're imaginative, yet down-to-earth and realistic. You're hip to the trends in society. You will likely face an important choice this year. Choose wisely.

Birthdate of: Mariah Carey, singer; Quentin Tarantino, director; Jann Arden, singer.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): Remain open to opportunities to travel or improve your knowledge and skills through courses, training or going back to school. Do something to expand your experience of the world.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): This is a good time to ask for loans, mortgages or assistance from others. It's also a good time to ask to borrow things from others if you need them.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Without question, you can benefit from all kinds of partnerships and close relationships now. Get out and schmooze! Enjoy the company of others. This is not the time to go it alone.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): You must constantly remember that there are many ways to improve your job or get a better one now. Think of what your perfect job would be, and aim for that.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Think positive thoughts. Plan to take a vacation (or two). Expect romance, love affairs, social invitations and sporting excursions to entertain you. Party on!

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Many things in your home scene are going to improve so beautifully that you'll be grateful for where you live. You'll also be grateful for your warm family relationships.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Your positive frame of mind is what attracts good fortune now. People and favorable circumstances come your way simply because you believe it will happen!

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): There's no question that almost all of you will earn more money this year. Count on it. Expect it. Visualize it. Plan how you will spend it.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): It's important to know when Lady Luck is smiling on you. If you're going to row a boat, you might as well row with the tide. This is your lucky year! Use it.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): I guarantee that you are going to learn something extremely important this year. It will be so valuable that it will be a life-changing event or experience.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Just go with the flow and accept the fact that people want to see you now. Enjoy the company of others!

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Your career, your reputation in the community, your relationships with family (especially parents) will all improve enormously at this time and for the rest of the year. Enjoy your good fortune.

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis Sudoku

by Dave Green

2		9				4		1
			3	8	9			
	5						8	
	6		2		1		9	
	1						6	
	2		5		7		1	
	9						7	
			6	3	2			
1		4				8		6

Difficulty Level ★★

3/27

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HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.
Tips and program at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

3	4	1	5	7	6	2	9	8
9	2	6	8	1	4	5	3	7
7	8	5	3	9	2	1	6	4
4	9	7	1	6	5	3	8	2
5	3	2	4	8	7	9	1	6
1	6	8	2	3	9	7	4	5
8	5	4	9	2	1	6	7	3
6	1	3	7	5	8	4	2	9
2	7	9	6	4	3	8	5	1

Difficulty Level ★

INNER AWARENESS
Jaime Licauco

Reality's different levels or dimensions

HAVE YOU WONDERED WHY some people cannot believe in the existence of a nonphysical world even though they may have encounters with nonphysical beings?

I remember a friend who saw the ghost of his father in his living room after the father's burial. The ghost smiled then disappeared.

My friend, a highly rational and skeptical man, could not believe he saw his father's spirit because he did not believe in ghosts. He dismissed the incident as just a product of his own imagination.

"Maybe I just missed my father, and so my mind created and projected an image of him. But he wasn't really there," he said.

Bias

Others dismiss ghosts and other nonphysical entities because of religious bias. The Christian religion teaches that when a person dies, his/her spirit goes to heaven, purgatory or hell and, therefore, cannot return to earth. "Whatever is seen is the devil's work, or a product of one's imagination."

The great English essayist and thinker Sir Francis Bacon pointed out that once a person adopted a point of view or opinion agreeable to him/her, he/she would do everything to preserve that belief. Even if there were better reasons to believe otherwise, he/she would make distinctions or rationalizations so that the original opinion or belief remained intact.

I see examples of this tendency of the human mind quite often.

I once accompanied an American science writer to see our faith healers (psychic surgeons) at work. He saw the healer open the body of a patient with his bare hands, take out diseased tissues or blood clots, and close the opening without any trace of the procedure.

The American watched all this at close range and took lots of pictures.

When the process was over, the writer slumped on a chair in a state of shock. I was talking to him but he did not hear anything. He just sat there staring blankly. His wife gave him water to drink. Afterwards he said to me, "I see it, but I don't believe it!"

When his article came out in Omni Magazine, sister publication of Penthouse, he declared that the whole process of bare-handed psychic surgery was completely fraudulent. But he could not explain how Filipino faith healers did the trickery in front of him.

"The hand is faster than the eyes." He believed what was taken from the patient's body, the tissues or blood clots, or whatever they were, were hidden cleverly in the hands of the healer and did not really come from the patient's body.

This is still the opinion on psychic surgery of majority of western investigators. "It's simply sleight-of-hand or trickery."

Different dimensions

But I think there is another explanation why some people cannot believe in ghosts, elementals, psychic powers and other paranormal events. It has something to do with different levels or dimensions of reality.

We have, on the one hand, our common, day-to-day type of reality, which neuro-scientist Lawrence Le Shan calls Ordinary Reality. But there is another way of perceiving the world, what Le Shan calls Clairvoyant Reality.

The problem is that people using ordinary perception do not and cannot see other levels of reality. Thus, they cannot believe it exists. To "see" spirits and ghosts, or experience a supernatural event, one must somehow be in an altered state of consciousness.

I think the basic problem lies in the insistence of materialist science that there is only one level or dimension of reality, the physical world. All the rest are illusions or imaginary. So they label supernatural stories "fairy tales."

Commonly held or accepted beliefs are difficult to change. There was a time when everybody believed that the sun revolved around the earth, until Galileo proved it was the other way around.

But since that view was considered not only unscientific but, worse, heretical from an ecclesiastical standpoint, Church authorities forced him to retract his statement or be burned at the stake. He reluctantly retracted under duress but he reportedly murmured, "But it (the earth) still moves."

Mexican shamans, whom anthropologist Carlos Castañeda wrote about in his fascinating books (beginning with "The Teachings of Don Juan"), say there are two ways of looking at reality, Tonal and the Nagual.

The Tonal corresponds to Le Shan's Ordinary Reality and the Nagual to Clairvoyant Reality. A person in the Ordinary Reality cannot see anything beyond the physical world. But, in the Nagual mode, he/she can see the unseen, or what ordinary eyes cannot see.

Psychics, mystics, and holy men and women of all countries from ancient times to the present have attested to this fact.

Note: For inquiries on books, paranormal services, and seminars on Inner Mind Development, ESP and Intuition Development, and Soulmates, Karma & Reincarnation conducted by this writer, please call 8107245, 8926806; fax 8159890; or e-mail jtlicauco@tri-isys.com.

Getting the fab summer body

GETTING FIT FOR SUMMER IS NOT as hard as you think.

You can achieve a fabulous yet healthy body by managing your weight.

Weight management is not only important for developing a physique that you can show off but also for long-term health.

One of the ways to manage your weight successfully is by integrating cardiovascular exercise into your fitness regimen. Reshape your body by doing a lot of walking, jogging, running, cycling or swimming to burn calories and increase your metabolism.

If you want to gain weight, you can do cardio exercises that will also help you gain more muscle and minimize the amount of fat you gain.

Another effective way to manage your health is by including nonfat milk in your daily diet. Nonfat milk contains all the essential nutrients adults need, minus the fat.

Long known for its benefits in strengthening the bones because of its calcium content, milk was found recently to play a key role in weight management.

Milk has such essential nutrients as protein, vitamin A, vitamin B12, vitamin D, potassium, phosphorous, niacin and riboflavin that keep the body healthy.

Nestlé
nesVita
Pro Weight Management

NONFAT milk has all the essential nutrients adults need, without the fat.

People who want to shed a few pounds will find that the nutrients in milk play a big role in the body's natural fat-burning ability, making weight-loss efforts more effective.

According to the United States National Dairy Council, three servings a day of low-fat or nonfat milk as part of a reduced-calorie diet help regulate body weight and burn more fat than cutting calories alone.

Consuming more calories than your body can burn is the main obstacle to achieving your desired weight. Increased intake of nonfat milk increases caloric intake but not saturated fat, making it easier to shed those calories.

Nesvita Pro-Weight Management, a nonfat milk powder fortified with vitamins and minerals to help meet an adult's daily nutritional requirements, is one product that can help weight watchers manage their weight more effectively.

With exercise, balanced diet, and Nesvita Pro-Weight Management every day, you can achieve your desired figure for the summer season and the rest of the year while keeping your body healthy and more active.

Nesvita also has a range of wellness products specifically designed to meet the Filipino adult's unique health needs.

As an energy booster at the start of the day, Nesvita Cereal Milk Drink offers a healthy combination of wheat and milk filled with calcium and fiber for superior energy.

For a healthy heart, Nesvita Pro-Heart has Acticol that helps lower bad cholesterol. Nesvita Pro-Digestion, with its natural soluble fibers called Actifibras, helps cleanse the digestive system.

For stronger bones, Nesvita Pro-Bone Protection has Calci-Lock that helps lock calcium in your bones to keep them strong.

Nesvita Pro-Weight Management is available in leading supermarkets and groceries nationwide.

Take the bitter for the sweet

From page D1

tea and enjoy its benefits. Its versatility on the dining table easily lends itself to various culinary expressions.

In a recent bold and progressive move by Health Secretary Francisco T. Duque III, the *ampalaya* was officially included in the Sampung Halamang Gamot list of the department.

This was based on the conclusions by Dr. William Toves that the vegetable, "when used as dry powder extracts… has already demonstrated hypoglycemic activity."

In this respect, the vegetable is now considered natural medicine.

Trivia and more

Here are some tips on the use of *ampalaya*:

Juicing

Green veggie juicing delivers all the live enzymes your body needs for better cell nutrition. A friend and frequent guest in my radio program "Ma Beauty Po Naman" (Sunday, 11-12 p.m., DZMM/ABS-CBN Radyo Patrol 630), Louie Chincuanco shares a personal recipe that was instrumental in his losing 40 pounds and improved health.

If you wish to "sweeten" the juice, you may mix it with *buko* juice.

Recipe

Mix ½ of peeled *ampalaya*, cucumber, green bell pepper, red apple; three stalks celery, one piece garlic. Blend with ½ glass of water. Drink on an empty stomach 2-3 times daily (www.wellness-care.bravehost.com).

Cooking

To neutralize the bitterness, mix the sliced veggie in rock salt, rub and shake off. Then toss into your salad bowl. Another way is simply to leave it in the freezer for 15 minutes until it smells and tastes better.

Body scrub

Shred ½ cup of the veggie, place in blender, mix with one tablespoon of virgin coco oil. Rub all over your body, except the face. Rinse immediately. It's a good skin softener and blemish remover.

Over a cup of tea

If you will pick a beverage when with friends, make it *ampalaya* tea. While discussing the merits of this vegetable, Lito Abelarde, president of Charantia, said the tea was not meant to be taken on an empty tummy.

Ladies who lunch and binge on pastries should have a tea bag handy. This way their blood sugar is controlled. You can now enjoy your sweet highs safely and surely with *ampalaya*.

But *ampalaya* or no *ampalaya*, say the following affirmation:

"Sweet is my life today."

Love and light!

A diva's advocacy

THE YEARS HAVE BEEN ESPECIALLY good to actress Gloria Diaz, the country's first Miss Universe.

At 55, she remains lovely and bright, standing tall and straight.

Her regal look, innate grace and inner glow enable the former beauty queen to continue to shine in film and on television.

GLORIA Diaz

She has also become an inspiring advocate of bone health and wellness, reaching out to help women over 40 to live life to the fullest.

Diaz has always lived life to the fullest. She has been known to try new things, do them her way and accept whatever consequences they brought. She has not hesitated to speak her mind on subjects she is passionate about.

Professionally, she has become a fine actor, her work earning her the recognition of critics and award-giving bodies. She is currently in the cast of the top-rating ABS-CBN soap "Sana Maulit Muli." Before that, she had a major role in the movie "Kasal, Kasali, Kasalo," the 2006 Metro Manila Film Fest top-grosser.

But her work has not kept her from another role, as spokesperson of Roche Philippines' BonDiva Women's Campaign for Bone Health. The advocacy, she says, is giving her added purpose in life.

The campaign encourages women with osteoporosis (brittle bone) to actively seek and stay on treatment. It connects them with other women with the same problem so they can draw encouragement from each other's support.

Osteoporosis, Diaz says, is a neglected silent disease that slowly robs the bone of its density and quality. As a result, the skeleton is weakened and the osteoporosis sufferer is exposed to greater risk of fracture notably in the areas of the spine, wrist and hip.

Diaz says she is committed to bone health advocacy because she has seen how older family members and friends suffer from debilitating and sometimes fatal fractures.

Through BonDiva, she has realized that osteoporosis can be remedied and the effects delayed. The campaign organizes various activities, including workshops on osteoporosis management. It encourages and supports patients in complying with the once-monthly Ibandronic acid treatment.

Diaz says this kind of support is important as many women stop taking their medication because they find it inconvenient. She says the once-monthly therapy makes it easier to stick to the treatment.

This year, Diaz says BonDiva advocacy will be brought to women in key cities.

She met recently with BonDiva members in San Fernando, Pampanga, accompanied by nutritionist Sanirose Orbeta, who talked about bone-building food; and orthopedic surgeon Emil Tablante of St. Luke's Medical Center, who talked about preventing and managing osteoporosis with the new once-monthly Ibandronic acid.

Diaz says the BonDiva (hotline 8971234; website www.bondiva.com.ph) program also encourages women to try new things, see new places, meet new people, and make new friends.

Eye disease may increase risk of death in diabetics

A STUDY SHOWS RETINOPATHY, a common diabetes-related complication of the eye, is associated with an increased risk of dying within a given period of time in adults with Type 2 diabetes.

Retinopathy arises when diabetes damages the tiny blood vessels of the retina, the light-sensitive tissue at the back of the eye. It can lead to blurred vision and blindness if unchecked.

Dr. Markku Laakso, from the University of Kuopio in Finland, and colleagues compared the outcomes of 425 men and 399 women with Type 2 diabetes. The subjects were divided into three groups based on results of eye examinations: no retinopathy, background (early) retinopathy, or more advanced "proliferative" retinopathy.

All of the subjects were free from heart and vascular disease initially. They were followed for 18 years.

In women, proliferative retinopathy was associated with a 2.9-fold increased risk of death from all causes. This type of retinopathy in women was also associated with a three-fold increased risk of cardiovascular death and a nearly five-fold increased risk of coronary heart disease death.

Risks for death were also elevated, though to a lesser extent, in women with background retinopathy.

In men, proliferative retinopathy was significantly associated with death, increasing the risks of all-cause, cardiovascular, and coronary heart disease mortality by 3.05, 3.32 and 2.54 fold, respectively.

The association between retinopathy and mortality was independent not only of conventional cardiovascular disease risk factors but also of blood sugar control and duration of diabetes, the authors noted.

Source: Diabetes Care, February 2007

Reuters

Your Doctor Knows Best

Melchor M. Chan, MD, FPCP, FPSG, FPSDE

Question:

I am recently having abdominal pains and they say I might have peptic ulcer. Could this be due to my preference for spicy foods?

Doctor Says…

A peptic ulcer is basically a break, a disruption, or an erosion of the lining of the gut. The term 'peptic' refers to pepsin—an enzyme responsible for breaking down proteins in the stomach. Depending on its location, peptic ulcer may have different names (*e.g.* gastric ulcer if it is in the stomach; duodenal ulcer if it is in the first part of the small intestines).

Normally, several protective mechanisms are in place to prevent ulcer formation. For various reasons, this protection is breached, allowing stomach acid and pepsin to irritate and damage the lining of your gut, ultimately resulting to peptic ulcer. Previously, peptic ulcers were thought to result from eating spicy food, or develop because of a stressful lifestyle. Today, doctors know that the cause of most ulcers is bacterial infection with *Helicobacter pylori*. This bacterium may be transmitted from person to person by close contact such as kissing, or through contaminated food and water. Although most people with ulcers have this bacterium living in their gut, not all individuals infected with *H. pylori* will develop ulcer. Another major cause of ulcer formation is the continued use of anti-inflammatory medications also known as NSAIDs (nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs) such as aspirin and some painkillers. Other causes or factors that can aggravate ulcers include smoking and excessive alcohol intake. Although critically ill patients (such as those suffering from severe burns, or head injury, or those on breathing machines) are at risk of developing the so-called 'stress ulcers', it is unclear whether everyday stress at home or at work causes ulcers.

Symptoms of peptic ulcer are variable. Upper abdominal pain is common but it may not always be present and can differ from person to person. Some complains of pain getting worse or reports of getting better after eating. Occasionally, patients would have 'night distress', which is being awakened early in the morning because of this gnawing upper abdominal pain. However, it should be noted that pain of peptic ulcer has poor correlation with the severity of the disease. Some may have no symptoms—ulcers often come and go spontaneously without the patient even knowing it unless serious complications such as internal bleeding, obstruction, or perforation occur.

Prompt assessment by your physician is important in determining if peptic ulcer is the cause of your symptoms. Your doctor will get a detailed history of your symptoms, examine your abdomen, and may order certain tests which may include blood test, stool exam, breath test (to determine infection with *H. pylori*) and/or endoscopy (an instrument in which doctors can view your digestive tract).

A peptic ulcer is not a condition that you should treat on your own. Although over-the-counter medicines may relieve your abdominal pain, the relief you get will only be temporary. Your physician will give you medication and proper advice for the relief of your abdominal pain, eradication of bacterial infection (if present), possible change in medications (for those chronically taking NSAIDs), and address the complications that may have already set-in. It is with your physician's help that you can be assured of the healing of your ulcer.

Remember, it is always best to consult your doctor if you are experiencing symptoms, such as abdominal pains.

***Dr. Chan** is a Gastroenterologist. He is an active consultant at the University of Santo Tomas Hospital (USTH) where he is presently the head of the Digestive Endoscopy Unit. He holds clinics at the USTH and Cardinal Santos Medical Center. Dr. Chan is also an Assistant Professor of the UST Faculty of Medicine and Surgery.*

This column is supported by AstraZeneca Philippines as part of its disease awareness campaign. This is not intended to replace the advice of a healthcare professional. Always consult your doctor.

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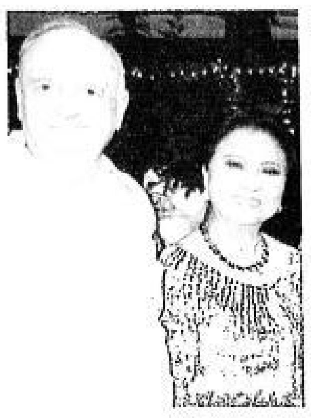
RUDY Tee, Shirley Matias Pizarro and Lynn Agustin. Standing: Ciso Chan, Steffi Inocentes, Ferdie Agustin, Archie Castillo, businessman Berck Cheng and wife Lisa Gokongwei of Summit publications

ANGELA, Nene and Bobby Leonor. Standing: Dennis and Mia Leonor, Jun Leonor, Ruben Torres and Quina Leonor


ALFRED and Letty Hahn

ROSE Lazaro, ace photographer Alex Van Hagen, Nena Casimiro and Andy Liboro

Au revoir and happy birthday to a Broadway star

WITHOUT BATTING AN EYELASH

Maurice Arcache

Photos by Alex Van Hagen using **Kodak** EasyShare system

MARY ANN Ansaldo Chan, Jojo Zabarte and Frannie Aguinaldo Jacinto. Standing: World-class singer José Mari Chan and Mr. Rock and Roll RJ Jacinto

RAFFY Francisco, Cindy Oppen and Twinky Lagdameo

JAIME Laya

GINA Ocampo Leonor, Lia Leonor Colayco and Dina Leonor Villasor

JUNBOY Leonor of The Dawn

TINA Jurado

GENEVIVE Benedicto, Anna Sobrepeña and Grand Benedicto

EDWARD and Margarita Delgado

LAWYER Tito Tesoro and wife, couturier Patis Pamintuan T.

IT WAS DEFINITELY A FUN get-together of real close pals, the dinner party for our very own world-class singer **Lea Salonga** hosted by Cosmo *Manille*'s popular couple, businessman **Jun Leonor** and wife, one of *Manille*'s top hostesses, **Nene Santos L.**, *palanggas*.

The party was held at the beautiful garden of the Leonor compound in Pasay City.

The couple's son, **Junboy Leonor**, a member of the hot, hot The Dawn rock band and one of Lea's closest pals, made sure that the honoree met some of our hip pack.

The happening was a *despedida* cum birthday celebration for Lea S. who left *Manille* shortly *après* the party.

The excellent dinner menu was personally chosen by Nene L. and done by her own kitchen staff, dahlings. After dinner, Lea and her hubby, the very nice **Rob Chien**, went table-hopping to meet the invitees.

Highlights of the evening were the singing of "Happy Birthday" to Lea, who turned 36 the day she left for New York (two days after the party), and the blowing of candles on her birthday cake.

She was off to the Big Apple for her new Broadway role in the renowned "Les Miserables" musical, *palanggas*.

With booze flowing and the Tribo Manila Band composed of **Robbie Sanchez, Fritz Barth** and **Ramon Mancio** playing, the party really got rolling, way past Cinderella's bedtime, dahlings.

Ultimate Orient

Though I was reluctant to travel all the way to Pasay, the invitation from the Bank of the Philippine Islands to "The Ultimate Orient in the Philippine Islands" was intriguing.

BPI hosted this fab event for tons of its clients and chosen invitees at the awesome Le Pavillon, dahlings.

The theme were the four elements of nature—earth, water, air and fire. Each element was related to BPI and its Preferred Banking. Highlight of the event was an eye-catching fashion show featuring **Rhett Eala**'s elegant designs and Jewelmer's exquisite pearls.

Douglas Nierras' Powerdance presented dazzling performances to introduce each fashion segment inspired by an element.

The best part was the performance by the unmatchable queen of jazz **Verni Varga**, no less, dahlings.

The happening turned out to be a visual treat. "The Ultimate Orient in the Philippine Islands" is just the first of many events lined up by BPI. Can't wait for the second, *palanggas*.

Twisting and shouting

We were invited to the huge bash of Metrobank Platinum MasterCard and Lifestyle Asia to celebrate the roaring '60s with a "Twist and Shout" happening at the new and posh Marco Polo Plaza Cebu, *palanggas*.

Marco Polo Plaza Cebu hotshot president **Rey Villar** and well-loved general manager **Hans Hauri** welcomed the Platinum gang from Cebu and *Manille* to reminisce and groove to the music of the homegrown Renaissance band, no less, dahlings.

Looking and feeling great in their '60s outfits were National Artist **Bencab**; **Patis** and **Tito Tesoro**; **Willie** and **Geraldine Ocier**; Silk Cocoon's **Francis Lim**; **Alfredo Roca**; and Cebu Vice Mayor **Michael Lopez Rama**.

Anna Sobrepeña, a woman with beauty and brains who did a great job of putting together this event, looked dazzling. Fashionable Rep. **Cynthia Villar**, former Guimaras Gov. **Emily Lopez** and **Margarita Delgado** were head-turners.

Other hotshot guests were **Jerry** and **Lianne Tiu**, with their daughter **Cheryl**; dashing business magnate **Edward Delgado**; **Paco Magsaysay**; **Mike Toledo** in his vintage Dior suit; and French businessman **Charles Zani**, a valued client of the hotel.

Guests at the exclusive event, like National Commission for Culture and the Arts' **Ambeth Ocampo** and Heritage Society's *amiga mia*, **Bambi Harper**, were treated to a yummy buffet. Premium prizes were raffled off throughout the evening as they "twisted and shouted" until dawn, *palanggas*.

Law firm anniversary

It certainly was a high-powered bash, *palanggas*, the Bengzon law firm's fifth anniversary, cocktail reception at The Continental & Baron's Bar at the chi-chi Tower Club in Makati.

How else would you call it, dahlings, when no less than **President Macapagal-Arroyo** headed the list of hotshot invitees who breezed in to congratulate the awesome name-droppables of the firm headed by topnotch and attractive lady lawyer **Ma. Romela M. Bengzon**, managing partner. Beside her was mom **Nenita Mosqueda**, who helped entertain the VIPs.

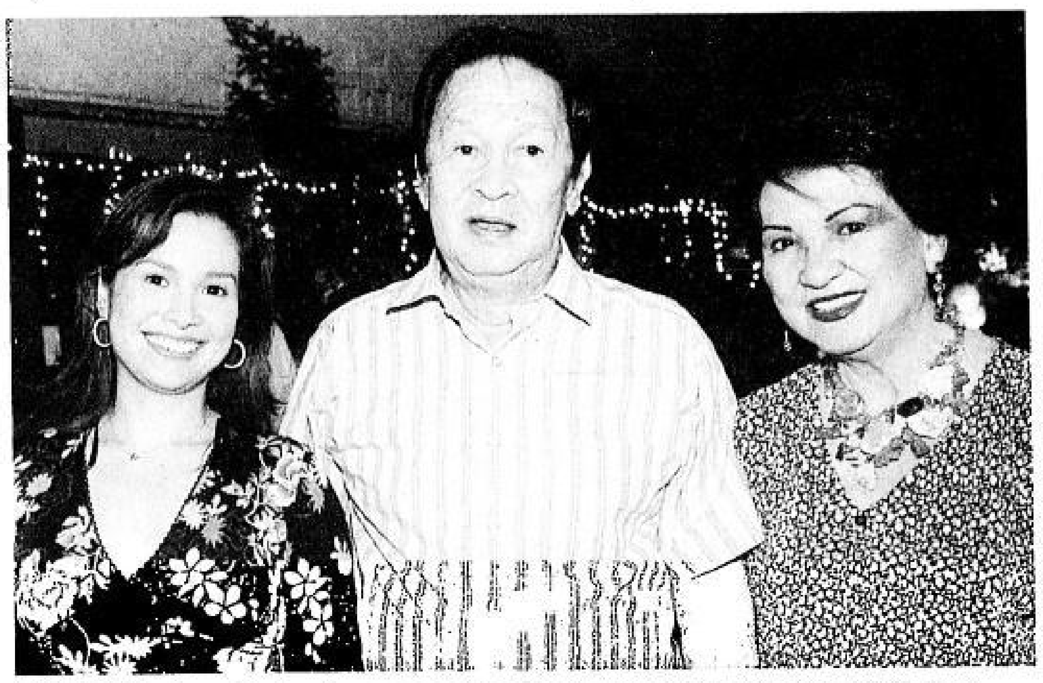
Lawyer Bengzon, *palanggas*, who is from Iloilo, has beauty and brains. She was licensed to practice law in New York but returned to the Philippines where she has gained a reputation as a hotshot international corporate lawyer, specializing in mergers and acquisitions, project finance and international joint ventures.

She was named by President Arroyo as a member of the 2005 Constitutional Consultative Commission, becoming its deputy secretary general. Wow! *Moi* could go on and on about our woman of the hour, *palanggas*.

The night had other stars, too. Guests included four-star general and Armed Forces of the Philippines chief **Hermogenes "Jun" Esperon**; **Edu Manzano**, a shining southern star in his own right, *palanggas*; heavyweight government personas like the "Little President" himself, Executive Secretary **Eduardo Ermita**; Justice Secretary **Raul Gonzalez**; National Security Adviser **Norberto Gonzalez**; Rep. **Mikey Arroyo**; presidential brother **Boboy Macapagal**; Gen. **José Bello Jr.**; Philippine National Railways general manager **Joey Sarasola**; and consummate PR man and brilliant political strategist **Reli German**, but who else, plus tons of members of the bar and other big, big names too hot to handle, *palanggas*.

HOTSHOTS. Rey Villar, president, Marco Polo Plaza Cebu; Jovi Abad, head of Visayas and Mindanao, Metrobank Card; Aloy Alday, first VP for marketing and sales, Metrobank Card; Lifestyle Asia's Sari Yap; and Hans Hauri, GM, Marco Polo Plaza Cebu

OPTICAL Media Board chair Edu Manzano; super handsome lawyer Ismael José; brilliant PR gent and political strategist Reli German; and AFP Chief of Staff Gen. Hermogenes Esperon Jr.


BIRTHDAY gal, world-class singer and actress Lea Salonga; with hosts of the affair, mega businessman Jun Leonor and wife Nene

SEATED: Boysie Villavicencio and Mellie Ablaza. Standing: Minerva Tanseco, Nenuca Blardony and Bing Buck

CHIT Salud and Karen Macasaet. Standing: Mimi Valerio, Bobby Novenario and Rosita Lesaca

MANDY Torres and Ed Cruz

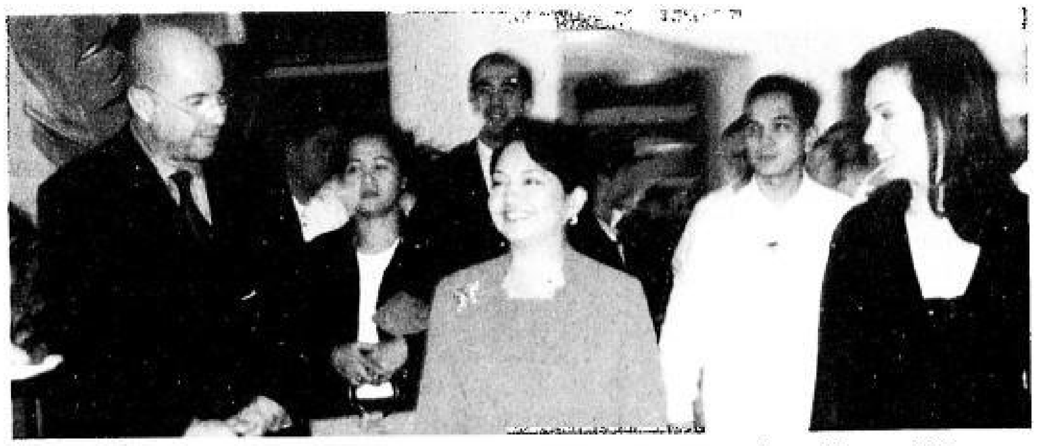
MENCHU Lauchengco-Yulo and Cherie Gil. Standing: violinist Roni Rogoff

ROB CHIEN

JEWELMER president Manuel Conjuangco; BPI president Gigi Montinola; and senior vice presidents Natividad Alejo, Imelda Trillo and Jojo Ocampo

INTERCONTINENTAL Hotel's first couple, Christian and Sunny Tirodon, with BPI officer Susan Lumabas

BPI vice president Olga Ang; Nancy Seechung Lim; and BPI senior vice president and head of BPI Preferred Banking, Imelda Trillo


PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo is welcomed by PNR GM Joey Sarasola and lawyer Mela Bengzon

ENTERTAINMENT

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MARK Gil and Rod Leido in the famous "Cabaret" scene PHOTO BY CESAR HERNANDO COURTESY OF URIAN

It's been 25 years since Mike de Leon's 'fraternity' film was premiered at the Cannes festival, alongside his other work, 'Kisapmata'

'Batch '81' revisited

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

CELEBRATING ITS SILVER year is Mike de Leon's "Batch '81," which was premiered, along with his other work "Kisapmata," at the Directors' Fortnight of the Cannes International Film Festival in 1982.

The recent Manila visit of Jérémy Segay, a member of the Directors' Fortnight selection committee, underlined the fact that, after De Leon's double screenings, a 22-year drought followed before another Filipino film, Mario O'Hara's "Babae sa Breakwater," was shown at the 2004 Directors' Fortnight.

In between "Batch" and "Babae," Lino Brocka's "Orapronobis (Les Insoumis)" was shown out of competition in 1989 and Raymond Red's "Anino" won the Palme d'Or for Short Film in 2000.

Apart from its Cannes screening, "Batch" is of special significance because it was made by scions of Golden Age studios, LVN and Sampaguita. Its director is Mike de Leon, grandson of LVN matriarch Doña Sisang de Leon, and its producer is Marichu Maceda, daughter of Sampaguita's Dr. Jose Perez.

Problems, sparks

Maceda recalled that shooting "Batch '81" was far from smooth-sailing. "People now say I was the only one who could get along with Mike."

Since she was producing "Batch" and the Vilma Santos-tearjerker "Pakawalan Mo Ako" at the same time, she soon encountered cash-flow problems.

"Mike got mad and threatened to resign," she recounted. "I'd had more than enough so I warned him: 'With or without you, I will finish this movie.'"

However, she refused to hire another director. "I didn't want to disrespect Mike. So I decided to finish the film myself," she said.

As luck would have it, among the unfinished scenes was the film's climactic "fraternity war."

"I knew nothing about shooting action scenes, so I called up my friends (action star) Fernando Poe Jr. and (director) Eddie Garcia for tips," Maceda recalled.

That was reason enough for De Leon to return to the set.

"He got worried that I would make good my threat and finish his film," she said, chuckling.

Personal crusade

The movie was a personal crusade for Maceda. She explained: "My son tried to join a fraternity. One night, I noticed he was black-and-blue from the hazing. I got so mad, I decided to make a movie that would expose the [negative] side of fraternities. When I told Mike, he thought of doing 'Batch '81.'"

In Cannes, Maceda came up with creative ways to promote De Leon and his film.

Her budget was only $10,000 and the cost of throwing a *merienda* party for the press was $2,000. With courage, she threw two such parties.

To scrimp, they didn't stay in a hotel. "We rented an apartment not too far—within walking distance—from the venues."

Breaking even

By the end of the festival, she had succeeded in selling "Batch" to a foreign distributor. "For exactly $10,000. At least, I broke even," Maceda quipped.

Last year, De Leon was honored by the Singapore-based Asian Film Archive, by preserving his works in its permanent collection.

The other Filipino filmmakers included in the archives are Lino Brocka and Lamberto Avellana. According to its website, the Asian Film Archive is "an independent charity founded to preserve [the region's] rich film heritage."

In accepting the honor, De Leon was quoted in the Archive's website as saying: "I'm very grateful to [the Archive] for taking an interest in preserving these films."

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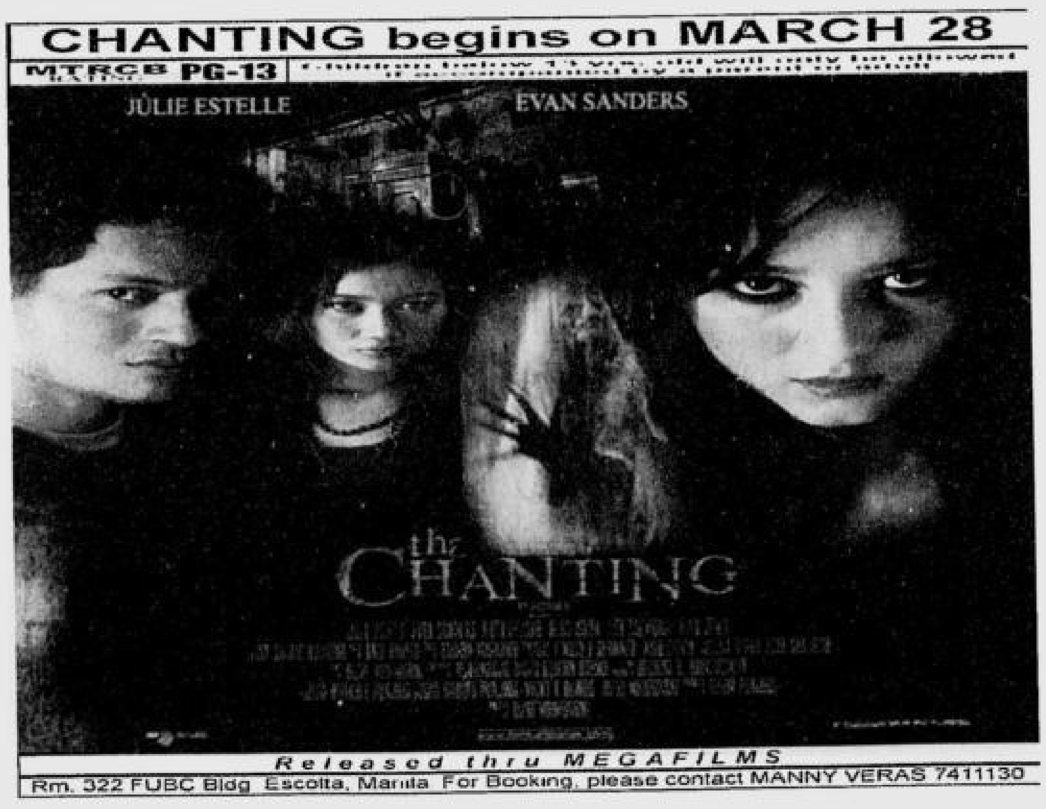
APRIL 15, 2007 • SUNDAY • 8 AM

Ticket Price: P500 (with FREE 1 Movie Pass & 2 Buy 1 Take 1 Coupon)

For inquirie, please contact the Marketing Services Dept. 395-2188 locs. 230 / 240

See Posters for more details
Per DTI-NCR Permit no. 1120, series of 2007

Tickets are available starting March 22 until April 15 at the ticket booth



CHANTING begins on MARCH 28

MTRCB PG-13

JULIE ESTELLE EVAN SANDERS

the CHANTING

Released thru MEGAFILMS

Rm. 322 FUBC Bldg. Escolta, Manila. For Booking, please contact MANNY VERAS 7411130

MYGLOBE
INFO + FUN + ATBP
"Gusto kong maka-duet si Beyoncé."
MUSIC FROM THE MOTION PICTURE
DREAMGIRLS

Posible na sa exclusive Dreamgirls downloads ng Globe!

	TITLE	ARTIST	RINGBACK CODE	RINGTONE KEYWORD
1	Dreamgirls	Dreamgirls	SB074	DGIRLS
2	And I Am Telling You, I'm Not Going	Jennifer Hudson	SB076	NOTGOING
3	One Night Only	Jennifer Hudson	SB077	1NIGHT
4	One Night Only (Disco)	Dreamgirls	SB078	1NIGHT
5	Cadillac Car	Dreamgirls	SB092	CAD
6	Fake Your Way To The Top	Dreamgirls	SB093	FAKE
7	Family	Dreamgirls	SB094	FAMILY
8	It's All Over	Dreamgirls	SB098	ALLOVER
9	I Want You Baby	Dreamgirls	SB099	IWANTU
10	Move	Dreamgirls	SB100	MOVE
11	I Am Changing	Jennifer Hudson	SB096	
12	I Meant You No Harm	Eddie Murphy	SB097	
13	When I First Saw You	Jamie Foxx	SB101	IFIRST
14	When I First Saw You (Duet)	JFoxx/Dreamgirls	SB102	IFIRSTDUET
15	Hard to Say Goodbye	Dreamgirls	SB095	
16	Dreamgirls (Finale)	Dreamgirls	SB075	DGIRLS

Enjoy these exclusive Dreamgirls Ringback Tones for FREE for 3 days!

RINGBACK TONES
To download, text **<CODE>** to **2332** • Ex: SB074 to 2332
To hear the ringback before downloading, text **H <CODE>** to **2332** • Ex: H SB074 to 2332 • P5 per minute

RINGTONE DOWNLOADS
For Monotone, text **TONE <KEYWORD>** to **2366** • Ex: TONE DGIRLS to 2366
For Polytone, text **PTONE <KEYWORD>** to **2366** • Ex: PTONE DGIRLS to 2366
P15/monotone • P20/polytone

FULL SONG & TRUE TONE DOWNLOADS
1. Go to the Globe 3G wapsite - http://3G.globe.com.ph/wap
2. Click on **MUSIC**
3. Click on **FULL SONG** or **TRUETONES**
4. Click on **DREAMGIRLS**
5. Choose a song. Click on **BUY**
P50/full song • P30/truetone

DREAMGIRLS Original Motion Picture Soundtrack out now in CDs.
Exclusively distributed by Sony BMG Music Entertainment.

SONY BMG MUSIC ENTERTAINMENT

ang lakas mo sa Globe

MTRCB RATING G FOR GENERAL AUDIENCE | Children below thirteen must be accompanied by parents or adults, because some scenes of violence may not be suitable for them.

THE WORLD NEEDS THEM NOW MORE THAN EVER!

Michaelangelo Donatello
Leonardo and Raphael
THE WEINSTEIN COMPANY AND WARNER BROS. PICTURES PRESENT
AN IMAGI STUDIOS PRODUCTION
TMNT
TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES
IMAGI
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JULIE ESTELLE
EVAN SANDERS
the CHANTING

Indonesia's blockbuster suspense-thriller now hits Manila!

The Chanting tells the story of Samantha (Julie Estelle) who left her abusive stepfather and moves into a measly boarding house, which her boyfriend Evan (Evan Sanders) feels is haunted. When the landlady shows the room to Samantha, the landlady suddenly hums an ancient Javanese chant, that somehow tapped Samantha's inner nerves, not knowing that the landlady has been possessed by the disturbed spirit in that room. And whenever Samantha hums that chant, the person who hears it faces horrible death.

OPENS MARCH 28 AT SM CINEMA

METRO MANILA

SM MALL OF ASIA 556-0104
SAN MIGUEL Coca-Cola IMAX THEATRE
SUPERMAN RETURNS 3D
7:00PM
Admission Fee- P250
T-REX IN 3D
1:00PM 2:30PM 4:00PM 5:30PM
Admission Fee- P200
1 TURISTAS
2 PATHFINDER
3 NORBIT
4 BECAUSE I SAID SO/ DREAMGIRLS
5 ALPHA DOG
6 ZOMBIES
PREMIERE CINEMA
PREMONITION
CENTERSTAGE
300
THE PODIUM
CINEMA 1
300
CINEMA 2
NORBIT
633-8976

SM NORTH EDSA 929-5452
1 YOU GOT ME
2 PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS
3 ZOMBIES
4 PATHFINDER
5 HAPPY HEARTS
6 BECAUSE I SAID SO
7 300
8 NORBIT
9 MONAY NI MR. SHOOLI
10 ALPHA DOG
11 TURISTAS
12 PREMONITION

SM MEGACINEMA 633-1901
1 TURISTAS
2 YOU GOT ME
3 PREMONITION
4 300
5 BECAUSE I SAID SO
6 PATHFINDER
7 ALPHA DOG
8 MONAY NI MR. SHOOLI
9 HAPPY HEARTS
10 NORBIT
11 SIQUIJOR
12 ZOMBIES

SM CITY FAIRVIEW 935-0749
1 MONAY NI MR. SHOOLI
2 BECAUSE I SAID SO
3 DREAMGIRLS
4 300
5 YOU GOT ME
6 NORBIT
7 TURISTAS
8 PREMONITION
9 ZOMBIES
10 GHOST RIDER
11 PATHFINDER
12 HAPPY HEARTS

SM CITY STA. MESA 716-1416
1 300
2 TURISTAS
3 NORBIT
4 PREMONITION
5 HAPPY HEARTS
6 ZOMBIE
7 DREAMGIRLS
8 MONAY NI MR. SHOOLI
9 PATHFINDER
10 ALPHA DOG

SM CITY SAN LAZARO 786-2488
1 300
2 PREMONITION
3 ZOMBIES
4 TURISTAS
5 MONAY NI MR. SHOOLI
6 NORBIT

SM SOUTHMALL 806-6888
1 PREMONITION
2 NORBIT
3 ZOMBIES
4 300
5 ALPHA DOG
6 PATHFINDER
7 HAPPY HEARTS
8 TURISTAS
9 MONAY NI MR. SHOOLI

SM CITY BICUTAN 776-3065
1 TURISTAS
2 MONAY NI MR. SHOOLI
3 HAPPY HEARTS
4 300

SM CITY MANILA 523-9240
1 TURISTAS
2 ZOMBIES
3 PREMONITION
4 PATHFINDER
5 NORBIT
6 300
7 BECAUSE I SAID SO
8 DEAD PEOPLE 2
9 HAPPY HEARTS
10 YOU GOT ME
11 MONAY NI MR. SHOOLI
12 ZOMBIES

SM CITY DASMARINAS (046)4323201-04
1 300
2 BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA
3 DREAM GIRLS
4 PATHFINDER

SM VALENZUELA 293-3917
1 300
2 DREAMGIRLS
3 PATHFINDER
4 HAPPY HEARTS

SM CITY SUCAT 829-4975
1 HAPPY HEARTS
2 300
3 TURISTAS
4 PATHFINDER

movietime PROMO

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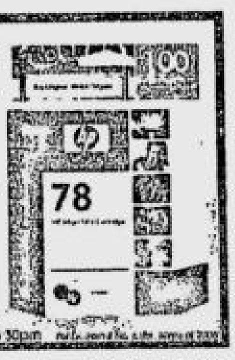
Redemption period is up to June 15, 2007.
See posters for more details.



SM CINEMA

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LUZON

SM CITY BACOOR (046)417-3868
1 MONAY NI MR. SHOOLI
2 YOU GOT ME
3 PREMONITION
4 ZOMBIES
5 300
6 HAPPY HEARTS
7 TURISTAS
8 PATHFINDER

SM CITY CLARK (045)625-5844-45
1 MONAY NI MR. SHOOLI
2 300
3 NUMBER 23
4 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING
5 THE HITCHER
6 HAPPY HEARTS

SM CITY MARILAO (044)0332013-17
1 300
2 HAPPY HEARTS
3 YOU GOT ME
4 PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS

SM CITY BATANGAS 885-6401-04
1 BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA
2 HAPPY HEARTS
3 EPIC MOVIE
4 YOU GOT ME

SM CITY PAMPANGA (045)9637681-85
1 BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA
2 300
3 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING
4 THE HITCHER
5 MONAY NI MR. SHOOLI
6 HAPPY HEARTS

SM CIY LIPA (043) 756-7925
1 HAPPY HEARTS
2 EPIC MOVIE
3 MONAY NI MR. SHOOLI
4 THE HITCHER

SM CITY LUCENA (042)7108977-80
1 YOU GOT ME
2 HAPPY HEARTS
3 THE HITCHER
4 EPIC MOVIE

SM CITY BAGUIO (074)6197838-39
1 PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS
2 BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA
3 THE GOOD SHEPHERD
4 300

SM SUPERCENTER MOLINO (046)474-3160
1 TURISTAS
2 300
3 MONAY NI MR. SHOOLI
4 BECAUSE I SAID SO

SM CITY STA. ROSA (049)5348611
1 BECAUSE I SAID SO
2 MONAY NI MR. SHOOLI
3 HAPPY HEARTS
4 THE HITCHER

VISAYAS MINDANAO

SM CITY DAVAO (082)2976998
1 300
2 HAPPY HEARTS
3 BLOOD AND CHOCOLATE
4 MUSIC AND LYRICS
5 THE GOOD SHEPHERD
6 EPIC MOVIE

SM CITY CAGAYAN (088)859-2884
1 EPIC MOVIE
2 THE HITCHER
3 HAPPY HEARTS
4 300

SM CITY ILOILO (033)3209422
1 NUMBER 23
2 RESERVED
3 MONAY NI MR. SHOOLI
4 300
5 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING
6 THE FOUNTAIN
7 RESERVED
8 THE GOOD SHEPHERD

SM CITY CEBU (032)231-3876
1 EPIC MOVIE
2 DREAMGIRLS
3 BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA
4 PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS
5 YOU GOT ME
6 SIQUIJOR
7 GHOST RIDER
8 300

SM CITY BACOLOD (034) 708 1010
1 BLOOD AND CHOCOLATE
2 300
3 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING
4 THE FOUNTAIN

SCHEDULES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

SHOWTIME
EVENT CALENDAR

MAXIMEDIA presents
SUMMER JAM Cueshé PILIPINAS TOUR
with special guests:
Salamin
Chris Cayzer

March 30 · 8:30pm · THE CENTERSTAGE SM Megamall Cinema 9
April 20 · 8:30pm · THE CENTERSTAGE SM MALL OF ASIA
April 27 · 8:30pm · THE CENTERSTAGE SM South Mall Cinema 3
April 28 · 8:00pm · SM Pampanga Amphitheater

Tickets at P150 · P200 · P300
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*FOR MORE INFORMATION ON MOVIE LISTING, MTRCB RATING, SCREENING SCHEDULES AND THE LATEST HAPPENINGS AT SM CINEMA

MMTA
METRO MANILA THEATERS ASSOCIATION

MOVIE GUIDE
NOW SHOWING

SHANG CINEPLEX
5th floor Shangri-la Plaza EDSA corner Shaw Boulevard, Mandaluyong City
Telephone 633 2227 *6337851 loc 171
1 (DOLBY) PREMONITION
2 (DOLBY) 300
3 (DOLBY) NORBIT
4 (DOLBY) BECAUSE I SAID SO
PREMIERE
(DOLBY) TURISTAS

Masagana CINEMA
(Pasay) tel 833.3290 / 833.3274
1 MONAY NI SHOOLI
2 ZOMBIES
3 ALPHA DOG

Center Mall Cinema
Baguio Center Mall, Magsaysay Avenue (Baguio City) tel (074)- (4449346)
1 300
2 MUSIC & LYRICS

Jade Cinema
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.5001 to 03
1 NUMBER 23
2 MONAY NI SHOOLI
3 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING
4 HAPPY HEARTS

CINEMA 2000
Cinema 2000 Waltermart Makati
Waltermart Center, Chino Roces Ave. cor. Antonio Arnaiz Pio del Pilar, Makati City
Tel 816.4214 / 816.4216
1 300
2 PREMONITION
3 NORBIT
4 TURISTAS

Centre Plaza Cinema
(Balanga, Bataan) tel (047) 237.7007
1 HAPPY HEARTS
2 BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA

EASTWOOD CINEMAS
(Eastwood City Walk 2, Eastwood City E. Rodriguez Jr. Ave (C-5) Quezon City) tel 687.6963 or 72
1 (DOLBY) PREMONITION
2 (DOLBY) 300
3 (DOLBY) NORBIT
4 (DOLBY) TURISTAS

starmall
(Mandaluyong) tel. 7266160
3 PREMONITION
4 (DOLBY DIGITAL EX) MONAY NI SHOLI
5 RESRVED

metropolis star cinema
www.clickthecity.com.ph
(ALABANG) tel. 8504285, 6433594
1 MONAY NI SHOOLI
2 PATHFINDER
3 TURISTAS
4 300

CINEMA 2000
Movie Theatres of the New Millenium

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7383
1 HAPPY HEARTS
2 DEAD PEOPLE-2
3 300
4

THEATRES
1 300
2 HAPPY HEARTS
3 PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS

Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall
(Biñan) tel. (049) 4111146
1 RESERVED
2 RESERVED
3 RESERVED
4 RESERVED

PACIFIC MALL LUCENA CINEMAGIC
Pacific Mall Lucena Tel. (042) 660-6271
1 HAPPY HEARTS
2 EPIC MOVIE
3 RESRVED
4 RESRVED

Cinema 2000 Cinemagix
(Urdaneta) tel(075) 568.6771
1 PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS
2 HAPPY HEARTS
3 THE HITCHER

Cinema 2000 Metrotown
(Tarlac) tel (045) 982.1729
1 HAPPY HEARTS
2 NUMBER 23
3 GHOST RIDER
4 PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS

Filinvest FESTIVAL CINEMA
(Muntinlupa) tel 850.3571 or 72
1 ZOMBIES
2 APHA DOG
3 TURISTAS
4 PATHFINDER
5 PREMONITION
6 300
7 NORBIT
8 BECAUSE I SAID SO
9 MONAY NI SHOOLI
10 HAPPY HEARTS

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Plaridel) tel (044) 795.3320
1 300
2 HAPPY HEARTS
3 FLUSHED AWAY

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Gapan) tel. (044) 4867736
1 DEAD PEOPLE - 2
2 HAPPY HEARTS

Lianas Cinema
(Pasig) tel 640.4748
1 MONAY NI SHOOLI
2 PEEP SHOW

Blue Wave MARIKINA
Sumulong Highway cor. Mayor Gil Fernando Street, Sta. Niño, Marikina City tel. 9341927
1 (DOLBY) 300
2 (DOLBY) TURISTAS
3 (DOLBY) PREMONITION
"PACQUIAO VS' SOLIS" APRIL 15, 2007

Lianas Cinema
(Alabang) tel 850.1276
1 THE HITCHER
2 SHE WALK BY NIGHT
3 NAGBABAGANG LANGIT
4 MONAY NI SHOLI

SUPER CINERAMA
Isetann Cinerama Complex Recto
tel 7334228
1 PATHFINDER
2 TURISTAS
3 MONAY NI SHOLI
4 300
5 PREMONITION

Lianas MovieCity
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202
1 DEAD PEOPLE-2
2 HUNGER FOR LOVE
3 MONAY NI SHOLI
4 FIRST TIME
5 SHAOLIN VS' EVIL DEAD

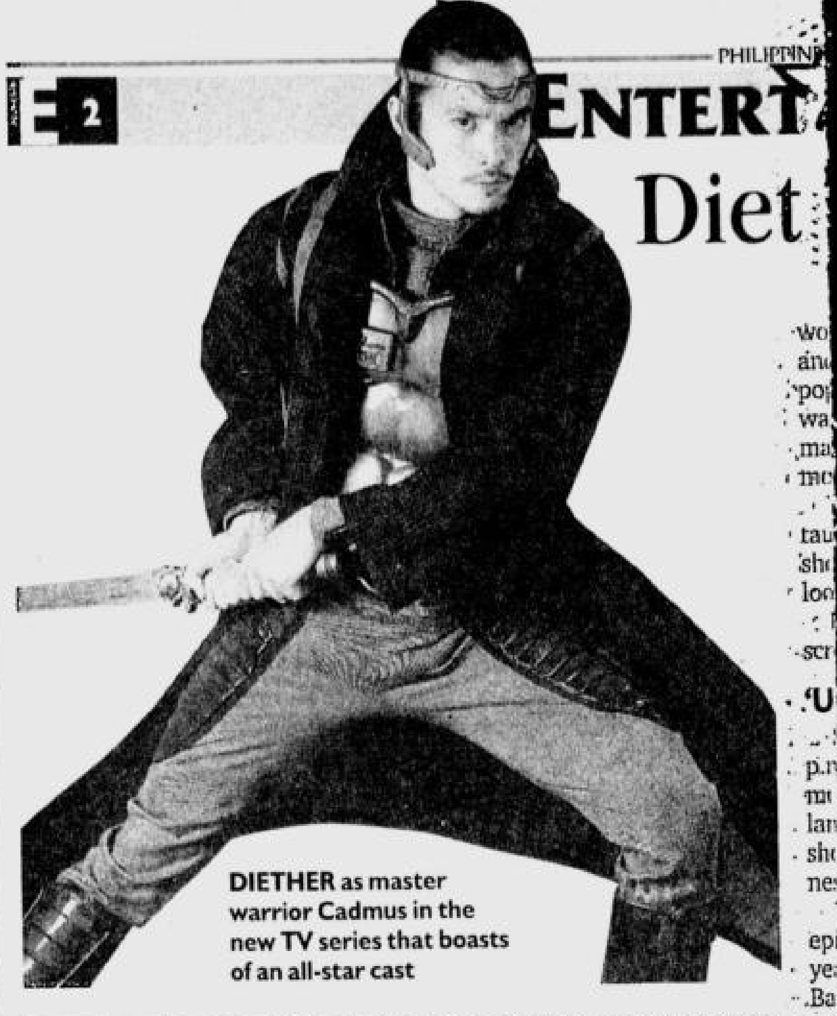
THE MARKETPLACE
Mandaluyong
tel 533.3851 / 533.3856
1 MONAY NI SHOOLI
2 PATHFINDER
3 YOU GOT ME
4 ASK THE DUSK

Fiesta World Mall
(Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790
1 MONAY NI SHOOLI
2 DEAD PEOPLE-2
3 HAPPY HEARTS
4 EPIC MOVIE

Berma Cinema
(Baclaran) tel 879.2030 / 879.2029
1 MONAY NI SHOLI
2 OBSESSION

MOVIES / SCHEDULES / PRICES SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

Diet



DIETHER as master warrior Cadmus in the new TV series that boasts of an all-star cast

---

MTRCB RATING ▸ PG-13 | Children below 13 yrs. old will only be allowed if accompanied by a parent or adult

NOW SHOWING

FLASH *** FLASH *** FLASH

$18,330,414
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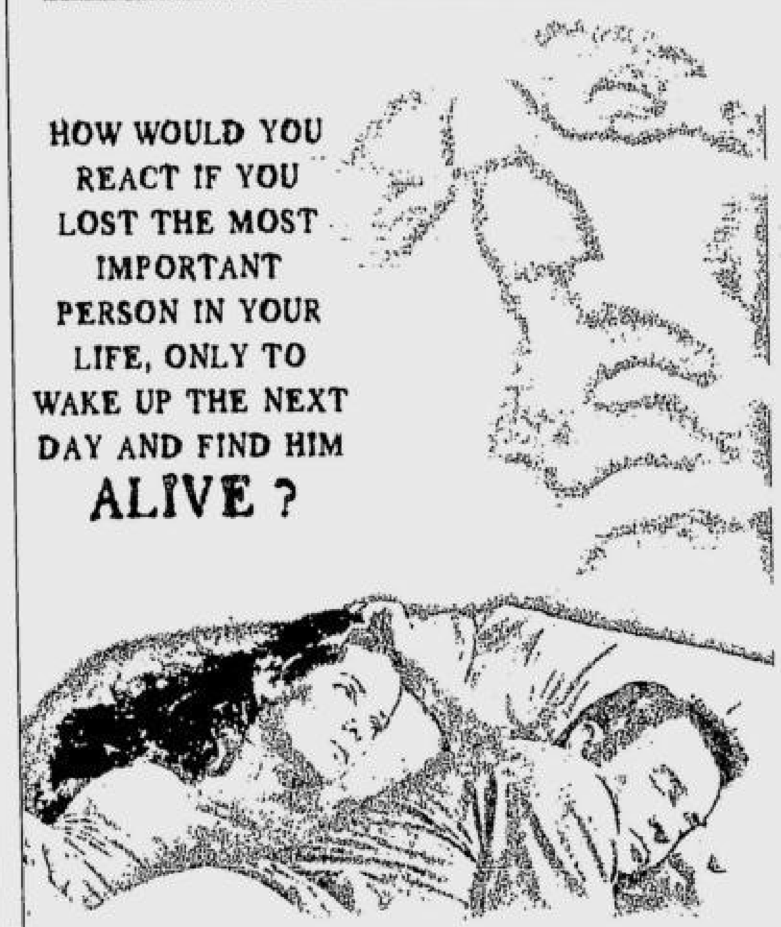
THE BIGGEST SANDRA BULLOCK OPENING...BEATING THE $13M WEEKEND BOX OFFICE OF "THE LAKE HOUSE"

SLEEPING WITH THE DEAD



HOW WOULD YOU REACT IF YOU LOST THE MOST IMPORTANT PERSON IN YOUR LIFE, ONLY TO WAKE UP THE NEXT DAY AND FIND HIM **ALIVE ?**

SANDRA BULLOCK
PREMONITION

CHANTING begins on MARCH 28

MTRCB RATING PG-13 | Children below 13 yrs. old will only be allowed if accompanied by a parent or adult

JULIE ESTELLE
EVAN SANDERS
the CHANTING

Released thru MEGAFILMS

Rm 322 FUBC Bldg Escolta Manila For Booking please contact MANNY VERAS 7411130

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

plays warrior in new 'tele-epiko'

From page E4

ndered why Joey was not on the air l· it was just music playing. So she)ped up in the radio booth. Joey sn't in. He was busy entertaining female guests outside. It prompted my m to issue a memo to Joey.

That incident, according to him, ght him much about work discipline. I uld say it paid off because … well, k where Joey is right now.

le's really "De Leon King" of TV ens.

s Girls'

Studio 23's "Us Girls" (Sundays, 8:30 .) marks its first anniversary this nth. Hosted by Chesca Garcia, Iya Vila and Angel Aquino, the "kikay" w covers fashion, food, lifestyle, fit s, beauty and celebrity life.

They promise to have even more fab sodes as they kick off their second r, which includes a feature on ngkok. Chesca turns all girly when ed about her marriage plans with her cager Doug Kramer. She blushes. "We about it but I'm still waiting for him ormally propose."

She shrugs off rumors that she doesn't rove of her bro Patrick's GF Jennylyn rcado. "I don't know where people get t idea. Jen is such a sweet girl. She nes to our house and we make her feel welcome."

Just like in her show, Jen and Chesca have girl bonding, too.

Soundtrack

Star Records and ASAP Music invites all true-blue romantics to experience the immense power of love with the release of the "Sana Maulit Muli" *teleserye* soundtrack. It includes Gary V's new rendition of the *teleserye*'s theme song, my fave band True Faith's "Isang Pangarap Lamang," Kim Chui's "Mine" and Mark Bautista's "Matud Nila."

Living up to its title, the CD is really worth listening to on repeat mode.

Clueless

Gina Alajar is clueless about the coffee-table book that will feature the Eigenmann Men (her ex-husband Michael de Mesa, Mark Gil and their sons). She laughs. "Maybe they plan to surprise me!"

Any surprises love has sent her way now that she's single again? She sighs. "I'd rather protect my heart from harm."

Gina and I agree that love can sometimes be the biggest enemy, indeed.

E-mail wateringholeshangrila@yahoo.com.

DID YOU KNOW…

LOS ANGELES—ACTRESS UMA THURman and hotelier Andre Balazs have split up. Thurman was once married to actors Gary Oldman and Ethan Hawke. *AP*

POWER PLANT
CINEMA
Rockwell Center, Makati City
☎ Tel. No: 8981440-41
DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND-EX

TURISTAS **R13** 1:45,3:55,6:05,8:15	**DREAMGIRLS** **PG13** 12:40 **BECAUSE I SAID SO** **PG13** 3:20	**PREMONITION** **PG13** 1:10,3:30,5:50, 8:10,10:30
300 **R13** 12:30,3:00,5:30, 8:00,10:30	**ALPHA DOG** **R13** 1:50,4:00,6:10,8:20	**NORBIT** **PG13** 1:45,3:55,6:05, 8:15,10:25

MOVIES AND SCREENING SCHEDULES SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE. FOR VERIFICATION CALL 898-1440/41

EASTWOOD CINEMAS
DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND-EX
Eastwood City Walk 2, Eastwood City
E. Rodriguez Jr. Ave. (C-5) Quezon City
To receive Eastwood City Events, Promos and Cinema schedule pls text **eastwood** and send to **2948** for Globe, Smart & Sun Cellular subscribers
For inquiries, call
687-6963
GUARANTEED SEATS
MOVIES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

1	**PREMONITION** 1:05, 3:35, 6:05, 8:35, 11:00 PG-13
2	**300** 2:45, 5:35, 8:25, 11:10 R-13
3	**NORBIT** 1:20, 3:45, 6:10, 8:35, 11:00 PG-13
4	**TURISTAS** 1:40, 4:00, 6:20, 8:40 R-13

SHANG CINEPLEX

① **PREMONITION**
MTRCB PG-13
2:30, 5:00, 7:30, 10:00

② **300**
MTRCB R-13
1:30, 4:20, 7:10, 10:00

③ **NORBIT**
MTRCB PG-13
2:45, 5:10, 7:35, 10:00

④ **BECAUSE I SAID SO**
MTRCB PG-13
1:20, 3:30, 5:40, 7:50, 10:00

PREMIERE THEATRE **TURISTAS** MTRCB R-13
3:00, 5:20, 7:40, 10:00

Movies and schedules are subject to change without prior notice

Catch the Cineplex Special

Catch **EXILED** - Nominee, **BEST MOVIE** in the **1ST ASIAN FILM AWARDS**
EXCLUSIVELY SHOWING at the **SHANG CINEPLEX**
from **MARCH 28** to **APRIL 4, 2007!!!**
Directed by **Johnnie To** - Nominee, **Best Director**
MTRCB R-18
Tickets at **P120.00**

6th floor, Shangri-La Plaza Mall
EDSA corner Shaw Blvd., Mandaluyong City
Call 633-7851, loc. 171/ 170 or 633-2227
for more details.

Shangri-La Plaza

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GREENHILLS SHOPPING CENTER, ORTIGAS AVENUE, GREENHILLS, SAN JUAN, METRO MANILA
THEATRE MALL GREENHILLS
a landmark reinvented!
NOW SHOWING

CINEMA 1 **TURISTAS** 10:30 , 12:50 , 3:10 5:30 , 7:50 , 10:10 R-13

CINEMA 2 **ALPHA DOG** 11:45 , 2:25 , 5:05 7:45 , 10:30 R-13

DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND-EX

PROMENADE GREENHILLS
…a dineterntainment for all!
NOW SHOWING

CINEMA 3 **PREMONITION** 11:45 , 2:25 , 5:05 7:45 , 10:30 PG-13

CINEMA 4 **300** 11:00 , 1:45 , 4:30 7:15 , 10:00 R-13

CINEMA 5 **NORBIT** 10:20 , 12:10 ,2:45 5:20 , 7:55 , 10:30 PG-13

TICKET PRICES & SCREENING TIME SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE. FOR CINEMA INQUIRIES, CALL: 722 4496.

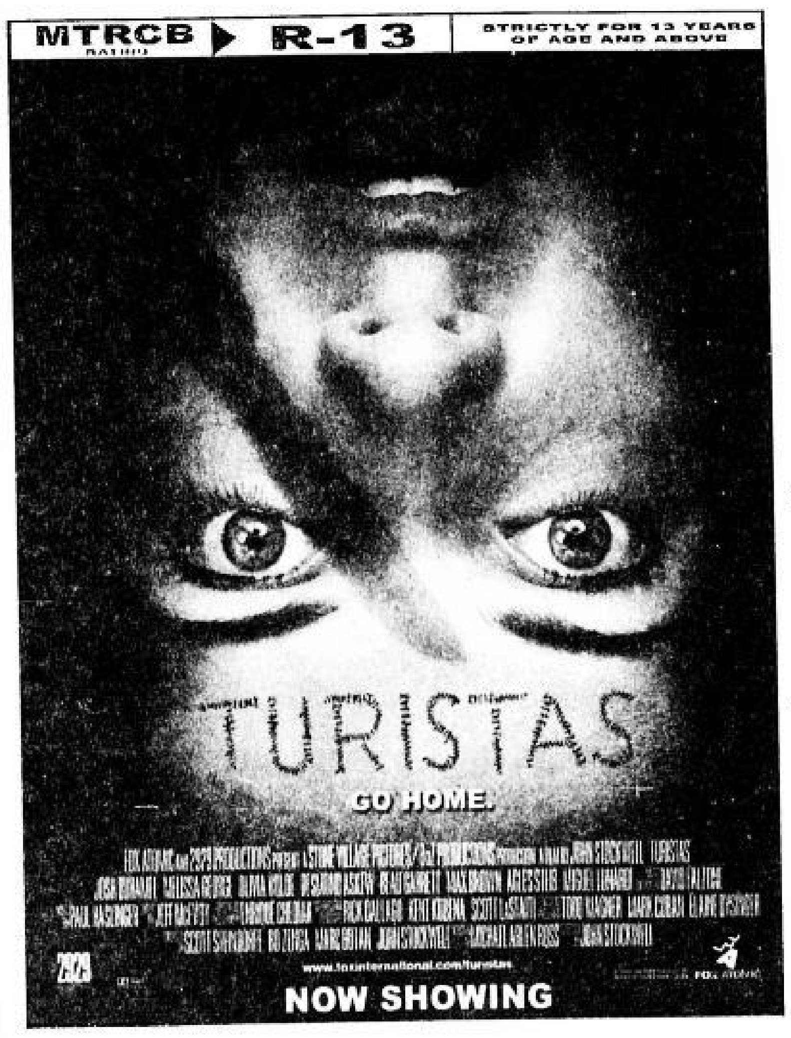
MUSIC MUSEUM

March 23, 2007	SITTI , IN LOVE	8:30 PM
March 30 , 2007	[illegible]	8:30 PM
APRIL 13,14 & 20,21 2007	ROCK THE VOTE	8:00 PM
May 4 , 2007	HALE	8:00 PM

TEATRINO

EVERY MONDAY	DANCE NIGHT	7:00 PM
March 22 & 29 , 2007	RAYMUND LAUCHENGCO	8:30 PM

PROMENADE GREENHILLS
FOR INQUIRIES PLS. CALL 722-4532 LOC.116



MTRCB RATED R-13 STRICTLY FOR 13 YEARS OF AGE AND ABOVE
TURISTAS
GO HOME.
www.foxinternational.com/turistas
NOW SHOWING

glorietta GREENBELT ALABANG TOWN AYALA CENTER CEBU MARKET! MARKET! Ayala Malls Love Malls!

AT THE CINEMAS
Reserve your tickets by texting SURESEATS GB3 or SURESEATS G4 to 2333 (Globe) or 211 (Smart) or log on to www.sureseats.com for web reservations.
Movie schedules may change without prior notice. For verification, please call 729 7777
THX

G1 GLORIETTA 1	1 TURISTAS	2 NORBIT	3 ALPHA DOG	4 ZOMBIES
G4 GLORIETTA 4	1 TURISTAS	2 DREAMGIRLS	3 THX 300 GUARANTEED SEATS	
	4 BREAKING & ENTERING	5 BECAUSE I SAID SO	6 NORBIT	7 PREMONITION
GB1 GREENBELT 1	1 300	2 NORBIT		
GB3 GREENBELT 3	1 THX 300 GUARANTEED SEATS	2 THX NORBIT GUARANTEED SEATS		
	3 BREAKING & ENTERING GUARANTEED SEATS	4 PREMONITION GUARANTEED SEATS	5 TURISTAS GUARANTEED SEATS	
ATC ALABANG TOWN CENTER	1 THX NORBIT GUARANTEED SEATS	2 TURISTAS		
	3 300	4 ALPHA DOG	5 PREMONITION	
ACC AYALA CENTER CEBU	1 DREAMGIRLS	2 THE PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS	3 300	4 BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA
M2 MARKET! MARKET!	1 NORBIT	2 PREMONITION		
	3 MONAY NI SHOLI	4 ZOMBIES	5 TURISTAS	

At the Activity Center

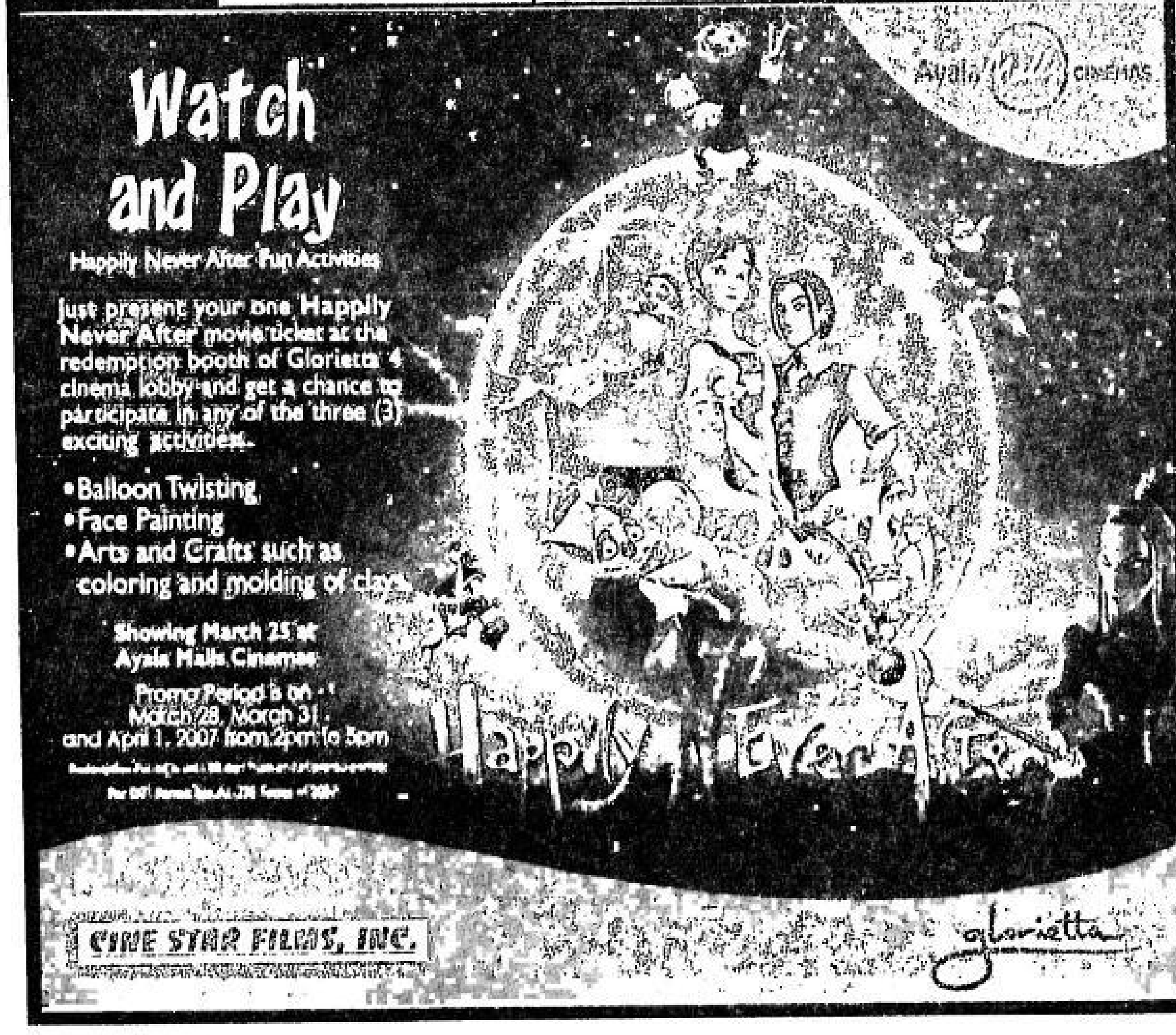
Customer Service text hotline: 0917 6095900
Customer Service Numbers: Glorietta - 752 7272; from 10am to 9pm
Greenbelt - 757 4853; from 11am to 9pm
Alabang Town Center - 842 2782; from 10am to 8pm
Ayala Center Cebu - (032) 231 5342 loc 324
Market! Market! - 886 7519

GLORIETTA	ALABANG TOWN CENTER
Fashion Week March 26 to April 1, 2007	Electroworld Exhibit March 26 to 30, 2007
AYALA CENTER CEBU	MARKET! MARKET!
For event inquiries, pls. call (032) 231-5342 loc. 332	Automatic Center: Gadgets Exhibit April 9 to 22, 2007

GREENBELT — Greenbelt 5 Sneak Peek presents Collection of Lila Almario
March 7 to 18, 2007

Onstage — Repertory Philippines presents GAY BIRDS
at REP's Globe Theater - March 16 to April 1, 2007
For inquiries, pls. call 887-0710

Ayala MUSEUM — Registration Ongoing for Summer Art Workshops at Ayala Museum
For more information, please call
Charis Oliveros at 757-7117 to 21 local 29



Watch and Play
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- Balloon Twisting
- Face Painting
- Arts and Crafts such as coloring and molding of clay

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Promo Period is on March 28, March 31 and April 1, 2007 from 2pm to 5pm

Ayala Cinemas
Happily N'Ever After
CINE STAR FILMS, INC.
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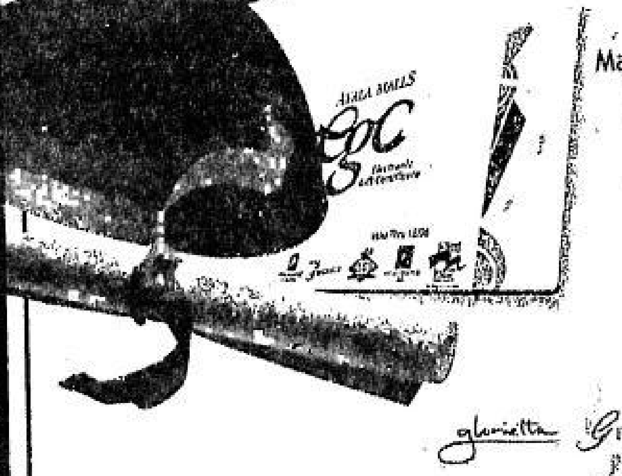

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Diet plays warrior in new 'tele-epiko'

DOLLY WOOD

Dolly Anne Carvajal

TAKING PINOY VIEWERS TO greater heights this April is ABS-CBN's ambitious *tele-epiko*, "Rounin." It boasts of technologically advanced animation and effects, unique plot, superb direction from Erik Matti and an all star-cast lead by Diether Ocampo.

Diether plays the master (Cadmus) who rules with wisdom, not force—very much like Diet in real life. The Rounin are the greatest warriors but love is their fiercest battle. What if like the Rounin, he has to choose between love and his vocation?

"Definitely love," replies Diet. "At the end of the day, I want to be able to share my accomplishments—big or small—with my beloved."

Isn't he wary of the looming competition with GMA 7's "Lupin?" "I don't see it that way," he says. "I'm glad the industry is producing more quality projects. It proves that Pinoys can create a world-class TV series."

And Diet is truly in a class of his own.

Rehearsal?

After the success of "Kasal, Kasali, Kasalo," Ryan Agoncillo is doing another movie about tying the knot. He top-bills Regal Entertainment's "My Kuya's Wedding" along with Maja Salvador, Jennylyn Mercado and Jason Abalos.

Ryan and Maja play orphaned siblings. When Ryan plans to marry Jen, Maja embarks on all sorts of schemes to stop the wedding.

What if this happens to him and Juday someday? Ryan replies, "I doubt anyone would interfere. But if anyone does, they can't make a dent in our plans even if they tried."

His wedding-themed films are sort of a "rehearsal" for him. "It has taught me that marriage is a union not only of two people but also of two families."

And what makes Juday good wife material? He smiles and says, "She's such a good soul."

Needless to say, that hooks Ryan's heart, body and mind for life!

Equal billing

I asked Jolina Magdangal's cool dad Tito Jun if he foresaw any billing problems with Jolens and Juday in their coming movie "Quija." He says, "We are not particular with billing but GMA Films assured us that it will be fair to both of them. Juday and Jolens call each other *kumare*. It's no big deal with them. *Nakakaaliw* that they tease each other *kung sinong unang ikakasal sa kanila.*"

Why not a double wedding then?

'Slingo'

Mojo Pacific Media's "Slingo" is the newest, possibly the most thrilling game show to hit local television. Aired Saturdays, 7 p.m. on ABC 5 and hosted by the inimitable Joey de Leon, it's patterned after the world's most popular casual online gaming format.

Studio contestants and home viewers have a chance to win cash and prizes by answering trivia questions.

Here's an interesting trivia about Tito Joey (whom I fondly call De Leon King). During his younger years, he was a DJ and my mom was station supervisor at DWWA.

One day, my mom

DIET/ E2

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GALLERIA Ticket Price THX:P161 131 Indie Sine:101 632-9116

1 PATHFINDER • THX 12:10 2:35 5:00
2 NORBIT 12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50
3 TURISTAS 1:25 3:30 5.35 7:40 9:50
4 300 12:00 2 30 5:00 7:30 10 00
5 PREMONITION 12:20 2:45 5:10 7:35 10:00
6 BECAUSE I SAID SO 1:05 3:15 5:25
7 ALPHA DOG 12.20 2:45 5:10 7:35 10:00
8 indieSine: ANAK ng TINAPA 1:30 3 05
SA AKING PAGKAGISING 5 20 7:25 9:30
9 ZOMBIES 1:25 3:30 5 35
10 M.O.N.A.Y. ni SHOOLI 1:20 3:30 5 40 7:50 10 00

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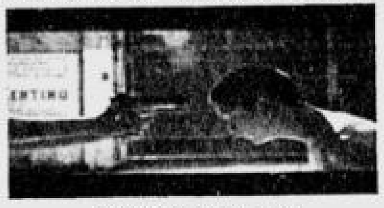

Starring Carlo Aquino, Ketchup, Lito Pimentel & Cholo Barrettol

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ERMITA P110 536-7809 to 12

1 PREMONITION 12 30 2:50 5:10 7:30 10:00
2 M.O.N.A.Y. ni SHOOLI 12:20 2:20 4:20 6:20 8:25 10:00
3 NORBIT 12:00 2:00 4:00 6:00 8 00 10:00
4 TURISTAS 12 30 2:50 5:10 7:30 10:00
5 ZOMBIES 12.35 2:50 5 05 7:30 10:00
6 PATHFINDER 12:30 2:50
300 5:10 7:30 10:00
7 ALPHA DOG 12:35 2:50 5.05 7:25 10:00

METRO EAST 682-8193 682-8199

1 PREMONITION 1.35 4:05 6:35 9 05
2 300 12:55 3:40 6:25 9:10
3 NORBIT 12:50 2:50 4:50 6:50 9:00
4 ZOMBIES 12:50 2:50 4:50 6 50 9:00
5 PATHFINDER 12 05 2:15 4 25 6:35 9:00
6 BECAUSE I SAID SO 12 50 2:50 4:50 6:50 9:00
7 TURISTAS 11:45 2.05 4.25 6:45 9.05
8 M.O.N.A.Y. ni SHOOLI 1:40 4:10 6:40 9:10

NOVALICHES 935-3231 / 935-3229-30

1 PATHFINDER
2 M.O.N.A.Y. ni SHOOLI
3 TURISTAS
4 ZOMBIES
5 300

PIONEER P100 887-5378

1 TURISTAS 12:20 2.25 4:30 6:35 8:40
2 PREMONITION 1:10 3.35 6:00 8 25
3 NORBIT 1 40 4:00 6:20 8.40
4 ZOMBIES 12 20 2:25 4 30 6:35 8:40

STA. ROSA Ticket Price P80 (049) 537-0807

1 300
2 BECAUSE I SAID SO
3 DEAD PEOPLE 2
4 THE HITCHER
5 M.O.N.A.Y. ni SHOOLI

LIPA P90 (043) 757-3064 (043) 312-5870

1 EPIC MOVIE
2 HAPPY HEARTS
3 THE HITCHER
4 M.O.N.A.Y. ni SHOOLI
5 DEAD PEOPLE 2

DASMARIÑAS Ticket Price P80 (046) 416-4332

1 BRIDGE to TERABITHIA
2 300
3 DEAD PEOPLE 2
4 PATHFINDER
5 M.O.N.A.Y. ni SHOOLI

ANGELES Ticket Price P90 (045) 892-2348

1 IT's A BOY GIRL THING
2 M.O.N.A.Y. ni SHOOLI
3 THE HITCHER
4 THE NUMBER 23

IMUS Ticket Price P100 (046) 875-3838 (046) 471-8188

1 THE NUMBER 23
2 300
3 DEAD PEOPLE 2
4 PATHFINDER
5 TURISTAS
6 M.O.N.A.Y. ni SHOOLI

STARMILLS Ticket Price P80 (045) 875-1927

1 BRIDGE to TERABITHIA
2 THE HITCHER
3 IT's A BOY GIRL THING
4 M.O.N.A.Y. ni SHOOLI
5 DEAD PEOPLE 2
6 300

BACOLOD Ticket Price P70 (034) 441-0450

1 IT's A BOY GIRL THING
2 RESERVE
3 BLOOD and CHOCOLATE
4 THE HITCHER
5 M.O.N.A.Y. ni SHOOLI
6 THE FOUNTAIN / 300

ILOILO Ticket Price P70.50 (033) 338-8070

1 300
2 M.O.N.A.Y. ni SHOOLI
3 THE NUMBER 23
4 THE GOOD SHEPHERD
5 BLOOD and CHOCOLATE
6 THE FOUNTAIN

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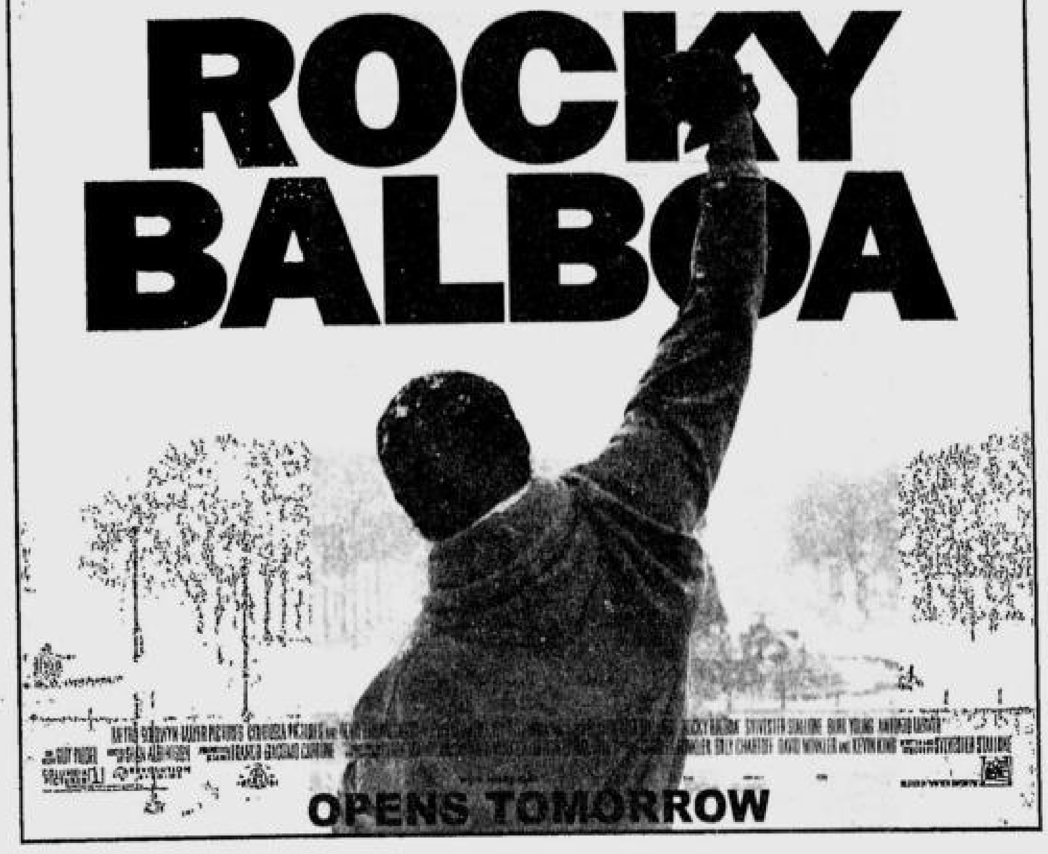
It ain't over 'til it's over.

ROCKY BALBOA



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ALPHA DOG 4:30 / 9:30	MONAY NI MR SHOOLI 12:30 / 2:30 / 7:15	ZOMBIES 1:30 / 3:30 / 5:30 / 7:30 / 9:30	
300 1:50 / 4:30 / 7:10 / 9:50	PATHFINDER 1:10 / 3:20 / 5:30 / 7:40 / 9.50	BECAUSE I SAID SO 12 10 / 5 00 / 9 50 DREAMGIRLS 2 20 / 7 10	NORBIT 1:10 / 3:45 / 6.20 / 8:55

NEW MALL 5

1 ZOMBIES 12:30 / 2:30 / 4:30 / 6:30 / 8:30	2 TURISTAS 12:05 / 2:15 / 4.25 / 6:35 / 8:45	3 ALPHA DOG 1 :20 / 3:50 / 6:20 / 8:50
4 PREMONITION 1:20 / 3.50 / 6:20 / 8.50	5 300 12:30 / 3:10 / 5:50 / 8:30	DOLBY DIGITAL dts SDDS

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